

MISS SLIMMENS'S BOARDING-HOUSE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE TALLOW FAMILY."

CHAPTER I.

"SINGLE GENTLEMEN PREFERRED."

[As Pennyville grew larger and more fashionable, the business of the new milliner from Boston rapidly increased, while very many of Miss Slimmens's oldest and most reliable customers deserted the little shop, climbing up a pair of stairs to give their patronage to the showy establishment whose windows flaunted nearly the whole stock of the possessor, above the first-floor dry-goods store of brick, new, and three stories high, which had now become the centre of attraction to the feminine portion of the village—flaunted its stock right in the ancient face of the weather-worn sign across the way. This was too much for human nature, and especially woman nature, to endure. There is a time when "patience ceases to be a virtue." Miss Slimmens felt that *that* time had arrived; and, two years after that tragic event which made such melancholy inroads upon her heart and fortune, the shop was closed, the sign was taken down, and the Boston milliner was left in possession of the field. Let not her sympathizers suppose from this that Miss Slimmens was vanquished. To that indomitable spirit there was no such word as fail. A card which appeared in the *Pennyville Eagle* will explain her purposes sufficiently to those able to appreciate the advantages which such a step must insure to a lady of her business habits and matrimonial aspirations:—

"WANTED.—A few genteel young men, as boarders, at No. 90 Washington Street, by a lady without family, who has more room than she requires. All the comforts of a home secured. Single gentlemen preferred."

Our fair friend had run some risk, as she had been obliged to invest quite a large part of the money which the sale of her stock in trade, etc. brought in fitting up the establishment indicated in the advertisement as No. 90. Dora, poor child, had lost her mother, and, being without other friend or protector in the world, had accepted the offer of her mistress to remain with her, assisting in the superintendence of the household as a compensation for her keeping.]

Yes, gentlemen, I really trust we shall; I trust

we shall get along admirably together. I depend upon you both for guidance and support. Hitherto, my efforts to obtain a compensation have been principally among my own sex; and, although there are a few honorable exceptions, I *must* say, as a general thing, women are dreadfully down upon one of their own sex who is struggling for a livelihood, especially when, like the one who is now before you, she is timid and unexperienced. I wonder if I shall ever, in my maturer years, arrive at an age when I shall be less sensitive and more capable of taking care of myself? Oh, gentlemen, I have suffered; but it "boots not to remember" the past. With the sweetest of Boston's many bards, let me exclaim:—

"Oh, faint not, in a world like this,
 And thou shalt know, ere long,
 Know how sublime a thing it is
 To suffer and be strong!"

What's that you remarked, Mr. Little? You think this butter must have suffered? Oh, Mr. Little, how sharp you are, now—he! he! I was not aware that it had the slightest unpleasant flavor; and my digestive faculties have always been considered rather *too* critical. I paid the highest market price for it. But that's only one of many instances of how an unprotected female is imposed upon. *How* did you say you took your tea, Mr. Grayson? Without sugar or milk? I declare, what a curious coincidence! Why, that's the way I take mine! It's the only way to take tea, don't you think so? All true lovers of

"The cup which cheers, but not depreciates,"

as "Gray's Elegy," I think it is, has it, consider its delicate aurora injured by any addition. What's that, Mr. Little? Old people are apt to take it without, but, for your part, give you plenty of the fixings along with it! Oh, certainly, as much as you choose. But I'm sure Mr. Grayson is not old, if he is a widower. How old are you, Mr. Grayson, if it isn't a secret? Rising of forty, perhaps? Fifty-six! Just twice my age. I never should have guessed it in the world. But I'm glad there's *somebody* who has arrived at maturity to give an air of dignity to our circle. We shall be a very pleasant family, I trust. I shall do my best to study

the tastes and peculiarities of each, in order to consult them.

A daughter of mine! Dora a *daughter* of mine! Oh, Mr. Grayson, you know not what you ask. Nothing but your being a stranger in this vicinity excuses so strange a question. Surely, you must have noticed that I am accosted by the prognostic of *Miss Slimmens*. I am unmarried, and have ever been, Mr. Grayson; my heart is still my own, my affections are virgin as the unknissed bloom upon the grape. Vergin' upon fifty, did you say, Mr. Little? I'm sure I don't understand you, and it's well for you that I don't. Besides, Dora is too old to be a child of mine. We are generally taken to be sisters. She has a good deal of my expression about the mouth and eyes—the same sort of smile. You speak true; she has a sweet countenance. We are said to resemble each other considerably, although we are no relation. She's a poor girl, without father or mother, that I've taken and made what she is. She's my adopted sister, now; and if I do well in the boarding-house, I intend to take her in as pardner before the end of the year, which will be doing a good deal, for she won't have as much to put in the general stock as would buy a dozen of eggs, whilst I've already infested nigh on to a thousand dollars. Have some of the chipped beef, Mr. Turner—do! Won't you have some more, Mr. Little? You're not fond of chips? he! he! I've always heard you were a witty person, but I hope you won't be too severe at my expense. Yes, Dora's a nice girl, but she's poor, awfully poor. If anybody thought of marrying her, I don't know where the wedding-dress would come from. It's a terrible pity she wasn't born an heiress, like myself. What's that, Mr. Little? I might lend her *my* bridal-robcs, if she should chance to want 'em? Really, now, I wasn't aware that I had any; I cut 'em up for bunnet-silk months ago; besides, what should *you* know about 'em, when they've never seen the light to this blessed day, and I keep the key of the chest myself? And as for that matter, he's only jesting, Mr. Grayson, as I never had any bridal-robcs, of course, seeing I never was married. Dear me, it's uncomfortably warm here; don't you find it so? Bridget, open that door, and bring some more bread—one slice, and cut it in two, mind, girl. Don't you see the plates are empty?

Yes, gentlemen, I trust we shall prove to be kindred spirits. There is nothing more absorbing to the contemplation than a united family circle, where congenial aspirations bind them

together. I am young to assume the responsibility of feeding and clothing—of course, I am speaking metaphisically of the clothing—so many of the opposite sex; but I intend to endeavor to fulfil the charge—to be a sister to you all. I hope my example will be such as to keep the younger members of this interesting group in the rectified path of probable and truth. If any of you stand in need of advice, come to me. If any of you wish shirt-buttons replaced, come to me. If any of you ever feel lonely, and in need of the tender constellations of home, come to me. If any of you wish your cravats and pocket-handkerchiefs hemmed, come to me. It shall be done freely and without charge. My object in establishing this boarding-house has not been simply to make money—to feed like a coroner on the hearts of my victims, charging them a high price and giving them cheap provisions in return, while I withhold that sympathy and intimacy which is more precious than bread and meat. My *principal* object has been to establish a *home*—a place where young men, away from their mothers, may find, for a moderate reimbursement, the comforts to which they were accustomed before they left the shelter of their childhood's roof. So plausible an object ought to succeed. I feel that it will. Already, at this, our first meal, I count before me six of the most respectable young gentlemen of Pennyville, and this interesting stranger, who intends to become a permanent residence, and who has brought along with him initials of the highest character. I have forebodings that I shall succeed beyond my fondest anticipations. In the mean time, my rent is high, and provisions—as *you* are aware, Mr. Turner, being in the grocery business—are very dear; which accounts for the price I have fixed upon as the weekly remuneration for what you receive. I would fain allow filthily lucre to remain unmentioned in my plans, but, as long as this cannot be, I know that to your noble and generous minds it will be a pleasure to contribute towards the support of an unprotected female obliged to abandon the millinery business to which she had clung for the last—five years; and that a dollar more or less will never be weighed in the balance by those of you who have sisters, or who expect to have wives.

Yes, gentlemen, I throw myself—really, Mr. Little, you drink considerable tea for a young man. This is your fourth cup, I believe. If you don't look out, you'll be sallow and withered up before you know it; too much tea is bad for young people. What's that? Am I a very great tea-drinker? No, of course I'm

not; two cups is enough for me, at my age. When I get to be forty, maybe I'll feel the need of more. They say tea makes people grow old dreifully fast; and sugar in it spoils the teeth. 'Twould be a pity for *your* teeth to go, Mr. Little; they're beautiful now. Ho! hel! thank you! mine *are* pretty good. I've been told—hey! better than they used to be several years ago? Why yes, I've no doubt they're better than they were when I was sheddin' my first set. Children's teeth is apt to be irregular about that time. Won't you have some more of the preserves, Mr. Grayson? Don't be backward about saying so, if you will, for Bridget can bring in some, if anybody wishes 'em. There's plenty in the cellar.

Well, gentlemen, our first meal together has taken place. This is an important error in my life. Please remember that the parlor is always at your service. I shall generally be there myself, evenings, to give it a familiar aspect. There's a guitar in there—I play on it myself some—have been learning lately on purpose to add another charm to *home*. I sing some. So does Dora. I should be happy to take a duet with any of you, at any time. I've also got a bodoor. It's right back of the parlor. It was originally invented for a bed-room, but, as I told Dora, a bodoor would be more appropriate. They're quite the style. And then they have such a reclusive air. They're a sweet place to retire to when one has something to confide, or feel weary of the prometheas throng. It will be one of my favorite hounts. If any one needs advice, or has got the headache, or anything to confide or mistrust, he is welcome to Alvira's bodoor.

CHAPTER II.

SHE IS CONFIDENTIAL WITH DORA.

WE'RE getting on swimmingly, Dora. It's a money-making business, when it's managed right—better, on the hull, than fixing over old bunnits. I've cleared nigh on to eighteen dollars this week, over and above all expenses. And then, you see, child, our chances for receiving the attentions of the opposite sex are so much better. You're too much in your infancy, as it were, to attach much importance to this advantage yet, but the time'll come when you'll depreciate it as it deserves. Why, the gentlemen scarcely take their eyes off you, when you're at table! They don't eat much more than half the usual amount. But I don't mind that; what I consider is *your* interests;

and that's why I've decided that you'd better not eat at the general table. You're too modest a girl, too much like me, to wish to be the sinecure of so many young men's eyes. I hate it myself, like poison; but of course *somebody* must reside at the head of the table, and so I'm actually impelled to. It goes against the grain, though I'm getting a little used to it. You shall have some of the best of vittals saved, and be waited on like the rest of us, but I guess you'd better eat by yourself.

That puts me in mind! I've invited Mr. Barker to bring in his flute, and we'll get up a concert this evening. I'm glad so many of the boarders have musical abilities; it's such a nice way of getting 'em into the parlor of evenings. Mr. Little's promised to keep his violin over here after this, and not at the store. He makes it an excuse for staying out evenings that he's practising; but once get his violin here, and we'll know what's really going on. He's the handsome young man in Pennyville—Mr. Little is. Don't you think so? But he says such impertinent things, and keeps the boarders laughing at things that he says, which I can't overhear. I declare I'd give him his walking-ticket, if he didn't pay such a good price for that front room, and if I hadn't hopes that he'd some time come round and yield to the fascinations which *somebody* flings around him. There, Dora, you needn't turn so red; of course I wasn't thinking of a poor girl like yourself catching Hal Little yet awhile. Mr. Barker's got a real talent for music. You can't think how pleased he was to discover that I sung and played the guitar. He said he should frequently join me in a duet. He asked me what were my favorite songs. I told him Moore's melodies; he said they were also his'n. He said he should be delighted to hear me sing "Love's Young Dream" or the "Last Rose of Summer," dressed in character. Wasn't that a charming idea? I'm determined to carry it out; though I think I should prefer "Love's Young Dream" to the other, as more appropriate. I'm going to surprise him some time soon, by making an appointment to meet me in my bodoor, and, when he enters, find me sitting upon a pile of cushions, with my guitar in my lap, dressed in Oriental custom, as Moore describes some of his heroines. Which would you choose, if you were me? I've always thought you'd good taste, Dora, and I shall be likely to abide by your decision.

And oh, Dora, I've got a secret to tell you—one of the greatest secrets of my life. You can't think how queer it makes me feel to be

having such a secret to confide. I don't know as anything will come of it, but it looks very much like it. And what makes it so delightful is the mystery which encircles it. I don't know when anything so mysterious has ever before happened to me. Look here! I found this in the sugar-bowl this morning. I was rather late, and several of the boarders had taken their places before I arrived; so I don't know who to lay it to. Wasn't that a sweet depository for a love-letter?—such an antique idea! When I took it out, I glanced around, but nobody looked the least conscientious. Mr. Little was carving the beef-steak as if it never would come in two, and, in fact, it *was* rather tough. Mr. Barker was looking at me as innocent as if nothing but coffee was in his thoughts, and the rest were just as usual. Do you know the handwriting? Neither do I. It's a nice plain hand, isn't it? I didn't venture to read it until breakfast was over and I had taken refuse in my bodoor. My heart palpitated uncommonly fast as I broke the seal. See here! it's poetry. It seems to be a parable of "The Vale of Avoca," a great favorite of mine, which I was singing to Mr. Barker night before last, which makes me guess he is the author, though two other gentlemen were present at the time, either of which may have been the one. How I wish I knew! But of course I shall find out. I intend to ascertain, this evening, to a certainty whether it was Mr. Barker. It was *one* of the objects I had in view when I invited him to a solitary duet in my bodoor to-night. It's nearly time now, and he's very punctual; but I guess we'll have time to peruse it. It is called

THE MEETING OF THE LOVERS.

There is not in this wide world a maiden so sweet
As the one in whose bosom all gentle thoughts meet.
Oh, the last rays of feeling and life must depart
Ere the bloom of that maiden shall fade from my heart!
Yet it was not that *Nature* had over her spread
The purest of pearl-white and brightest of red;
'Twas *not* her soft magic of beauty or youth—
'Twas something quite different from such things, in truth!
'Twas that she, the beloved of my bosom, was *near*—
That she made even common provisions seem dear;
And I felt how the best charms of life may increase
When we have them served up by a Goddess of Grease.
Sweet maiden Alvira, how calm could I rest
In thy bo—door of sweets, with the one I love best,
Where the storms which we feel in this cold world
should cease,
And where love and economy mingle in peace.

Now, *some* people might object, Dora, to the practical tone of what I have read you, but for my part I have ever thought that a proper

medium was the one to be preserved. It is a precept upon which I have ever acted, with *one* exception, to which you are better knowing than anybody else, save the villain who caused me to make such a fool of myself. When I've decided to my own satisfaction who placed 'em in the sugar-bowl, I'm going to return an answer in the saucer of his teacup. I've got one nearly finished now. If Mr. Barker's the one, I'll find it out before ten o'clock this night. I thought he looked a little sensitive at the table this noon. I saw Mr. Little winking at him—yes, actually winking—although he didn't mean me to see it. If he wasn't so provoking good-looking and liberal, I declare I believe I'd let that best room to the first application. I wish you'd see if my guitar is in tune; you can get it in tune so much quicker than I can, and the clock 's striking seven now.

There! I hear his voice in the parlor now. I wonder why he don't come immediately into the bodoor. He and them others are in a great glee about something; I hope it isn't about the corned beef we had for dinner. Mr. Little said he had become so permanently corned since he'd been put upon rations, that reports to his disadvantage had already become freely circulated in Pennyville; and Mr. Turner said he was afraid we had all been guilty of cannibalism without knowing it; he was confident we had been living off of Lot's wife for a week. I shall have to have fowls to-morrow, I perceive, though I didn't appear to hear 'em.

There, Dora, he's pitching his flute now. I think he plays like a second Morpheus. Do hear how sweetly he runs up the gamut. He's an ostrich in himself. Oh, if it *should* prove to be him who wrote—Dora, dear, he's coming this way. Hadn't you better slip down in the kitchen, and see how Bridget's doing the knives? I'm dreadfully afraid she puts the handles in hot water. And after that you may count the towels she's ironed, and then you may—well, no matter what—go to your room, if you want to. I'll tell you to-morrow the result of our—hurry, child, and shut that door securely after you; I'm getting to be dreadfully sensitive to drafts.

(To be continued.)

A FORTUNATE MISTAKE.

Paul, Laurie

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A FORTUNATE MISTAKE.

BY PAUL LAURIE.

It was on the evening of the 2d of January, in 185-, that I went to hear the Duchess Strainervoyce, who, at that time, attracted the fashionable world to her concerts, for no other earthly reason, I suppose, than to have it to say that they had listened to a real duchess, while, at the same time, I firmly believe that superior *native* talent "went begging." I went to hear the Duchess, partly to kill time, and partly from a desire to hear and see for myself the marvellous foreigner whose name was in everybody's mouth. When I reached the con-

cert-room, it was crowded to its utmost capacity. It was so closely wedged that one could have studied anatomy, after a fashion, merely from the impression of your neighbor's bones. At the close of the concert, I was borne along with the crowd, and jammed through the doorway at the risk of breaking every rib in my body. Ere I could escape from the throng, and while I was shrugging my shoulders to assure myself that my collar-bone was in its proper position, I felt a hand clasping my arm, and a musical voice exclaimed: "You good-for-nothing, I

thought I had lost you! What a frightful jam! I do believe my arm is broken, and my dress I know must be ruined, and all for the sake of hearing that Strainervoyce! I would not give Miss Dwight or Miss Floyd for a world of Strainervoyces!" I was on the point of replying that I agreed with her, but restrained myself, laughing inwardly at the novel position in which I was placed, and wondering who my fair companion could be. Evidently, she mistook me for her brother, or, possibly, her husband, judging from the familiarity of her manner. "Why, Ralph, how forgetful you are! Here is the cutter." Then adding, in a sympathizing tone, "Forgive me, Ralph—your poor head! I am sorry I made you come."

"Pardon me, madam, but—"

"O nonsense, Ralph! You have become half barbarian since you went to China, to permit me to seat myself, while you stand there as if I were your wife, and you ten years married, instead of your sister, whose ready assistant and attendant—in place of a better—you should be."

"Excuse me, but—"

"Ralph, I'll catch my death of cold sitting here; and such a long ride, too!" Here the lady gave a perceptible shiver. "Do muffle me up closer, Ralph, and sit down, or I will—"

What she would have done I did not wait to hear, but, tucking the robes around her closely, waved my hand to the driver, and away we glided over the crimp, sparkling snow, to the music of the merry sleigh-bells.

"I won't ask you to talk to me, with that headache, but I want you to listen to me," began my companion, the moment we started. "I wanted to talk to you coming in, but that little chatterbox, Maggie Woodbury, prevented me from saying a word to you. You remember poor little Milly Walker, Ralph. Her mother died about two months ago, and poor Milly has gone to live with the Deans. Mr. and Mrs. Dean have been very kind to her, but then they are poor, and of course it is impossible for them to do more than shelter her. How any one can have the heart to wound Milly Walker's feelings is a mystery to me, and yet every occasion that presents itself is seized upon by the Wares and Kings to insult her, even to commenting upon the poor girl's father's notions, as if she could have prevented that which occurred twenty years ago; and I have seen Sarah Ware imitating her walk, regardless of poor Milly's tears." I could not restrain an exclamation of disgust as I listened to this. "I knew it would disgust you, Ralph.

Well, the doctor says now that Milly will always be lame—there can be nothing done for her. I have been thinking, ever since her mother died, that, if she had a good teacher, she would not only in time be independent, but famous as a painter. You should see some of her attempts. Milly Walker is a genius, Ralph. But that would require money, and where is the money to come from? You know I haven't much, Ralph, but I have determined to do something for our old playmate. I can save out of my allowance at least one hundred dollars, and now, if you will give double that amount, what will that do for Milly? I was counting it up, the other day, and, if I am correct, it will send her to the — Institute, and pay for the full course; and, at the end of that time, if Milly Walker is alive, she will show the world what a woman can do. When I look at that poor girl, with her rare mind and her craving for knowledge, I cannot help thinking how superior she is to me, a mere idler; and I sometimes think that, if she had my place and I hers, there would be more justice in the distribution of the world's goods and comforts. Don't say I'm silly and sentimental, Ralph. I know you will give your share towards Milly's education, like a good brother, as you are. I have been talking to her about it, and I know I can manage it so as to overrule any scruples she may have against receiving anything from us."

Here my companion became quiet, and the question presented itself to my mind, "How am I to escape from this awkward position honorably? Here I have been guilty of listening to a communication intended for the ear of another—have been guilty of an inexcusable deception, practised upon a stranger and a lady knowingly. Perhaps the honest plan would be to acquaint her at once with the mistake, and solicit her pardon." I had at last summoned courage sufficient to clear my throat, and was about to commence my well-studied speech, when my companion gave a little laugh, as she said—

"Really, Ralph, you are very entertaining in your own peculiar way; but if you are as dumb when in the presence of Miss Vincent as you have been to-night, she is to be pitied, rather than envied. You are little better than a barbarian! But here we are at Uncle Graham's, and you know I promised to stop with Carrie to-night, so you will have no one to bother you the remainder of the road. How singular you do act, to-night, Ralph! Well, I won't tease you any more."

Suddenly, the driver drew up before an elegant residence, and, imagining I perceived a loop-hole whereby I might escape from my awkward predicament, I sprang out of the cutter, and assisted the lady to the ground.

"Is your head still aching, Ralph? Good-night. Why, you forgot to kiss me." As the fair face was upturned to mine, with its tempting lips awaiting the kiss, I pressed my shawl down from my mouth suddenly, and as suddenly felt my head drawn down to receive the most delicious kiss that ever was bestowed by maiden. "You need not wait; Carrie is coming—I hear her," said my companion, as she tripped up the steps, while I stood irresolutely beside the cutter.

"Then, my dear fellow," I mentally ejaculated, "it is time you were off." And, seating myself in the cutter once more, glided over the sparkling snow, but whither I knew not. I only knew that I had lost a charming companion, whose lips, a moment since, were pressed against my own, and whom, in all probability, I might never meet again. And when I recalled her generous offer, her sympathy for the poor lame girl, and her self-accusing spirit, so unlike that of my acquaintance in general, I longed to know more of her. Then, again, my cheeks tingled when I remembered the deception I had practised. And what would *she* think of me when she ascertained—as she most certainly would, sooner or later—the truth?

But my speculations were cut short by the abrupt stoppage of the cutter, whereupon I stepped out leisurely, picking up from the bed of the cutter, as I did so, an exquisitely embroidered handkerchief. Upon looking at it closely, I perceived the initials "C. D." in one of the corners. I was reminded of my situation, at that moment, by the inquiring glance the driver bestowed upon me, as he observed my movements. Without vouchsafing a word of explanation, I turned away from him, and walked homewards. Evidently, I bore a very strong resemblance to Mr. Ralph D., whoever he was. When his own sister and the servant were deceived by the resemblance, it must certainly be very great. True, my cap was drawn down firmly, almost concealing my eyes, and the lower part of my face was muffled up in a heavy shawl; still, taking everything into consideration, I said to myself, the similarity of dress, feature, and manner must be wonderful, thus to deceive one's relatives.

The winter air was in that communicative mood termed "nipping," and, remembering

that a walk of four miles lay between me and my lodgings, I walked forward briskly, revolving in my mind the different aspects of my adventure, as they presented themselves, one after another, and resolving to keep my own counsel. I had walked perhaps a mile, when I observed a gentleman approaching at a walk as rapid as my own. As he drew nearer, I was struck with his resemblance to me—height, size, manner, and dress, even to the plaid shawl around his neck, and the buttons upon his cap were the exact counterpart of my own. I think the resemblance must have struck him at the same time, for, as we were passing each other, we involuntarily paused, bade each other a pleasant "Good-night," scanning each other closely and curiously, then strode on. "Mr. Ralph D.," I said to myself, as I turned to look at him. Singularly enough, Mr. Ralph D. was at that moment looking at me; but the instant he was detected, he wheeled around and resumed his walk. Ere I reached my lodgings, I resolved to ascertain, if it was possible, who the young gentleman was who had arrived from China so recently, that I might thereby assure myself to whom I was indebted for a delicious kiss, and whose acquaintance I was very desirous of making.

Early upon the following morning, I sat down and wrote a few lines to Milly Walker, the lame girl, and inclosing one hundred dollars in the note, sealed it, and, depositing it in my pocket, sallied forth in quest of the information I so much desired. Wending my way to a friend's store, I encountered his errand-boy, who was at that moment entering the door.

"George," I exclaimed, affecting a careless manner, "are you acquainted with the — Road?"

"Yes, sir, very well."

"Can you tell me who lives in the large house with the brown-stone front, on the left going out, about four miles out of town? It has three columns, I think. The house stands back from the road."

"Oh, you mean Mr. Dwights. But it's more than four miles out there, sir."

"How far is it?"

"About four and a half; maybe more." •

"Thank you. That is all I want," I replied, as I passed into the store, where I addressed my note to "Miss Milly Walker, care of Miss C. Dwight, — Road;" then, sauntering out slowly, called the lad to me.

"By the way, George, I have a letter to deliver out there. Do you think you could do

it for me? If you would call a cab—any way that you could get there soon; and when you deliver it, don't delay a moment. I don't care about having you questioned."

He was a shrewd lad, and, as he listened to me, I knew, by the expression of his face, that he guessed my motive.

"You don't want them to know where it came from, if you can help it?"

"You understand me, I see."

"Well, I can manage it for you, Mr. Clark. My uncle, Mr. Dean, lives out there."

"Is Mr. Dean your uncle?" I inquired, hastily.

"Yes, sir."

"There is a lame girl living with him?"

"Yes, Miss Walker."

"Can I trust you, George?" I inquired.

"You may, sir, if you want to help Miss Walker without her knowing who is doing it."

"Well, this letter is intended for Miss Walker, as you will perceive. It is a *money* letter, and if you can convey it to her, that is all that is required. You will keep the matter to yourself?" I added, as I endeavored to place a small gold piece in his hand.

"No, sir, not a cent, Mr. Clark. I only wish I could do twice as much for Miss Walker," exclaimed the manly fellow. "I shall put the letter where she will get it, and she will never know where it came from. I will go out there to-night."

"Very well, George," I replied, as I left him, feeling satisfied that the note was in safe hands.

"That lady in blue?"

"No, the lady beside her."

"Have you not made her acquaintance? That is Miss Dwight, and a very particular friend of Miss Floyd's."

"Anything to Emma Dwight?"

"No; they are quite intimate, however. Let me present you."

I fancied Miss Dwight bestowed a look of more than ordinary curiosity upon me as my cousin presented me; but I—I had the effrontery to meet her inquiring look, as if unconscious of the fact that I had met those eyes before, and had received from those lips a sisterly kiss. As I seated myself beside her, I overheard the words, "Taking everything into consideration, I think very little blame can be attached to the gentleman," uttered in a merry tone by a gentleman who was at my elbow, but whose face was turned from me.

"Pray, have done, Ralph!" said Miss Dwight,

as she tapped his shoulder lightly with her fan, a faint blush suffusing her cheeks.

"But the coolness of the whole proceeding!" continued the gentleman, heedless of her remonstrances. "The fellow even gave her a brotherly kiss."

"Ralph!" exclaimed Miss Dwight, energetically, as the blood mounted to her forehead, dyeing her face and neck crimson.

"Come, come, Dwight! Don't ask us to believe that!" exclaimed one of the group.

"Well, she cannot deny having complained to me, the next day, that he was exceedingly stupid—thinking I was the offender all the while—and scarcely uttered a word; that, in fact, she had to do all the talking."

"We will take that with considerable allowance, too," replied one of the listeners.

"I met the fellow on the road," resumed the gentleman; "and I must say I never encountered a man so like myself in all my travels."

"In truth, you *are* a barbarian, Mr. Dwight, to tell such a thing upon your sister," exclaimed Miss Floyd, with a merry laugh.

"As if I did not owe her ten times that amount! Ever since my return, she has been teasing me in every conceivable manner," he replied, turning round suddenly towards her, and, in doing so, encountering my steady gaze. "S'death!" he ejaculated, with a perceptible start, upon facing me.

Miss Dwight flashed a meaning glance upon him, then suddenly turned towards me, as if to observe the effect his exclamation and manner would produce upon me; but I was equal to the emergency, and maintained an unruffled composure.

"I did not hear the first of that, Miss Dwight," I said, as I cast a careless glance over the wondering group, and another of pretended astonishment upon Mr. Dwight, who evidently felt no little annoyance.

"Perhaps it is just as well," was the reply, as she glanced at her brother. "Ralph really is unmerciful when he begins. I am glad you did not hear the whole; but now that it is out, I may as well give a correct version of the affair. Like an attentive brother, he permitted the crowd to separate us at the close of the Duchess Strainervoyce's last concert, and I was so unfortunate as to mistake a stranger for him, who accompanied me home without acquainting me with my error. Thinking that it was Ralph, and that his headache prevented him from conversing, I *did* permit my tongue to perform rather more than a fair share."

"Then all the blame must be laid upon Mr.

Dwight. He should be the last to mention it. His want of proper feeling is very much to be deprecated; but we will hope that he will change for the better," said Miss Floyd. "I think even now he exhibits signs of repentance."

"And have you no idea who the gentleman was, Miss Dwight?" I inquired.

"Until *lately*"—placing an emphasis upon the word—"I had not the slightest clue to the gentleman," she replied.

"Does she know the truth?" I asked myself. "Have I betrayed myself? I might have known that her woman's instinct would detect me." While these and similar thoughts occupied my mind, I became engaged in an interesting conversation with Miss Dwight. In the course of it, allusion was made to the Duchess Strainer-voyee.

"Did I attend her last concert?"

"Really, was it the last, or the one preceding it, or the second? Certainly, I attended *one* of them, but *which* of them? My memory was so treacherous! Perhaps it was the last; at least, there was a suffocating jam!"

And the conversation went on as before. The digression removed all doubts from her mind. I at least had known nothing of her adventure prior to that evening, when her mischievous brother made it public.

I do not think I was romantic at that time, and yet I must confess that, from the beginning of our acquaintance, I entertained the hope that Miss Dwight would one day become my wife. I was not disappointed.

It was perhaps six months after we were married that I carried home in my pocket a newspaper containing a flattering notice of Mrs. Clark's *protégé*, Milly Walker. As Mrs. Clark employed herself with her work, I drew forth the paper and read to her the notice. Milly was in Rome, pursuing her studies and making for herself a great reputation. As she listened to the flattering comments paid to her *protégé*, Mrs. Clark's face lit up with a glow of pleasure.

"Ralph used to laugh at me when I told him that Milly would one day make a great name for herself," she said, musingly. "But she has made a greater reputation for herself than even I ever dreamed of. How glad she will be to bring back to me some of these rare performances! I have so often wondered," she continued, as she resumed her work, "who it was that gave her that money."

"You mean the gentleman who accompanied you to your Uncle Graham's from the concert?"

"Yes. It was very singular, his giving the money in the way he did."

"Doubtless he did it to secure your good opinion."

"Then he has never had the satisfaction of knowing how it was received."

"Or as a kind of penance, to atone for the deception he practised."

"Certainly his gift has accomplished much more than he has any idea of; he would, though, very likely remember her, and doubtless has ere this heard the many flattering things said of her."

"Of course he has."

"How do you know?" inquired Mrs. Clark, looking up from her work. "He may be dead."

"But he is living, Caroline."

"Who is living?"

"The gentleman you so often think about, who gave Milly Walker a hundred dollars, and whom you kissed."

"Mr. Clark!" exclaimed my wife, as the work fell from her hands into her lap.

"Mrs. Clark!" I retorted.

"You don't think!—How can you say such a thing!" And a puzzled expression rested on my wife's face that, in spite of all my powers of resistance, forced me to laugh aloud.

"Oh! I remember now," she said; "Ralph said something like that once at Miss Floyd's."

"Then you deny having kissed him?"

She threw her work aside suddenly, and arose. "Harry! is it possible that it was *you*?"

"And very probable, certainly!"

"And you have concealed it all this time! You are the most deceptive of men!" she exclaimed.

"Don't blame me for doing what neither you nor any other woman can do, and that is, keep a secret—unless it be her age."

"I will not believe it!"

"Because you tried to surprise me into a confession, and failed," I replied. "Then let this be the proof." And I drew from my pocket (I was prepared for this scene) the embroidered handkerchief, and pointed out to her her initials, whereupon she boxed my ears.

ANNA HEYWARD: OR PERFECTED THROUGH SUFFERING.

BY ELMA SOUTH.

A FLOOD of moonlight is pouring, like a silver stream, into the still chamber where Anna Heyward lies sleeping in the cold, overlasting slumber of death. Her thin hands are crossed, as if in meek resignation, over her still bosom, and a lovely smile, death's beautifying gift, is playing around her pallid lips. Tears fill my eyes, and my heart pulses throb sadly, in the presence of the holy dead; and yet I should not weep that this sorrow-tried child of earth has passed away; rather let me say, in a burst of grateful rejoicing,

"Joy, joy forever! her task is done!
The gates are passed, and heaven is won!"

Long years ago, I knew Anna Heyward. She was then in the very meridian of hope and happiness, gay-hearted and enthusiastic. When she was surrounded by gay company, you were tempted to think that there were no deep tones to her heart; but in her quieter moments, you felt that she possessed vast capacities for suffering, which, when called forth, if she possessed not equal powers of fortitude and endurance, must overwhelm her in a sea of despair. But life still "looked gayly" to Anna Heyward. She was young, and youth has many pleasures—pleasures that only pall when Sorrow, that mighty teacher of truths, shows the utter vanity of all earthly joys. Wealth, youth, love, and friends—what more wanted Anna Heyward to make life a rich festival, a perpetual holiday of gladness and pleasure? But few mortals go down to the grave with all the flowers fresh in life's garland. First, there drops one bud of loveliness, then another, and the few that are left give not forth the sweetness of other years.

First fled Anna Heyward's wealth, and with it her friends. Alas, that the friendship of this world is so often but a bauble, that falls and is crushed when the golden chain that attached it to us becomes broken! "I repine not," said Anna Heyward, when she saw her summer friends depart. "I still have love left, and

"There is comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart."

It is this deep trust, this perfect faith, that makes woman's love so beautiful a thing, and the betrayal of it such bitter cruelty.

Anna Heyward, thou liest before me, still and cold, with thy deep love crushed upon thy silent heart! I saw thee when that love gave light to thine eyes and gladness to thy step. I saw thee when the first bitter agony was upon thee, that seemed crushing thy loving heart; and I was with thee when resignation had breathed upon thy soul, and thou at last didst recognize Heaven acting through man.

As I look at thy pale, closed lips, I can scarcely believe that those same lips uttered the words of passion and despair that I once heard issuing from them. That fatal night, the moonlight shone as brightly over the living as it now does over the dead. Anna Heyward and her lover were sitting beneath its full beams, and I heard her say, in a half smothered tone, that told too well that some fearful agony was working at her heart, "Go, then! I would not detain you. Once"—and her voice grew strangely mournful—"I could not have bid you go; but I have learned, in the school of sorrow, how to resign. You have sacrificed my love to your ambition; but may the happiness that you have taken from my heart cling to yours. Go!" I waited, but heard no more. Again I listened; but all was silent as is this death-inhabited room.

Some moments elapsed, when Anna Heyward entered the hall in which I sat. She threw herself, in an agony of grief, on the sofa, and sob after sob burst from her full heart. I have seen many an agonizing display of human sorrow, and heard from many a bleeding heart the pathetic prayer, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" but I have never witnessed so fearful an exhibition of despairing grief as this. It was the cries of a heart that had bravely endured poverty and loss of friends, breaking beneath the last cruel desertion of love. Consolation was vain. Silent and awed I sat, in the presence of this mighty grief, trying to solve the question, "Why should woman ever love?" Ah, question that is a solution of itself! Why clings the vine to the oak?

All that night, Anna Heyward mourned and bewailed her fate, in passionate, unresigned words. "She could not, she would not see the hand of God in this bitter dispensation. She wished to die. What cared she for life, when

all its hopes had departed? She had borne her other trials; this she could not bear;" and, in a dreadful moment of desperation, she poured out a beseeching prayer for death.

"Anna Heyward," I said, as I lifted her from the floor to which she had fallen, "you are mad, or else you would not send up such a petition as that. Rather thank God for the precious gift of life, even though sorrow cloud your hours; and pray that those sorrows may point you the way to heaven."

Night wore on. The moon faded from out the sky, and still that poor breaking heart had found no comfort, no peace, no rest. Long days of weary toil, and longer nights of sleepless woe, were hers. She no longer uttered loud complaints, but the unbroken silence of her hours and the tears that trickled slowly down her pale cheeks were far more eloquent than spoken words. I marvelled to see one who had so cheerfully borne the loss of wealth sink under this trial inflicted by love. I knew not then how madly woman's heart clings to its love, and that, compared with its precious ore, the wealth of this world seems as dross. Long, weary months passed by before Anna Heyward could speak peace to the troubled waves of her heart; but at last the storm passed away, and she beheld the blessed rainbow of resignation.

Soon after this, she accepted a situation as a governess, and in her new home she found few pleasures and many trials. One evening, I attended a party at the house in which she resided; and whilst the merry dance was in its height, we sat in a retired recess and talked. Suddenly, I felt her hand grasp mine convulsively. I looked up and saw a gentleman standing near, whom I at once recognized as the betrayer of Anna Heyward's love. Silently she watched him from her retreat, and I saw her sink back, but recover herself, as he approached the spot where we sat. At that moment, a flower that she held in her hand fell to the floor. He stepped forward, and handed it to her, and in so doing their eyes met. "Dear Anna!" was the sudden exclamation. She strove to speak, but in vain. A look of anguish passed over her expressive face, as she put her hand to her wildly beating heart. I feared that that poor, weak woman's heart would betray its silent workings. It was but a moment, and then she lifted her head proudly, and extended her hand to the new-comer. He grasped it warmly, then, suddenly releasing it, passed from her presence.

No other words were spoken during this strange, rapid meeting. It seemed but like a dream of reality, as we both sat absorbed in deep silence. It was the last time that they ever met; but the remembrance of that meeting never passed from Anna Heyward's heart; and those two little words, "dear Anna," lent to her remaining days a lifelong music that she scarcely dared avow, even to herself.

Anna Heyward remained but two years in her new home; then failing health compelled her to resign her duties. During these years, she had been gaining additional beauty of character, and adding richer gems to her crown of loveliness. A faithful discharge of duty, a noble forgetfulness of self, charity to all of God's creatures, and a patient, hopeful spirit—these were her glorious characteristics. Truly, sorrow had ennobled and trial perfected unto loveliness her character. Literature now became her employment, and she hoped that it would prove her maintenance. But she little knew the sorrows that this kind of life engenders, the disappointed hopes that darken the way, the cruel, heart-wounding criticisms, and the long hours of weary toil. Who would persist in a life like this, if literature were not "its own exceeding great reward?" Day after day, she pursued her task, with a brain that never tired and a heart that never ceased hoping. The world rewarded her with a miserable pittance, and listened, with a cold, unsympathizing heart, to the voice of the sweet singer.

But the time was fast approaching when she was to work no more. To the last of her strength, the feeble hand held the pen, whilst it traced the glowing thoughts of the bright intellect; and when the body grew weaker, the mind, that glorious gift from the Creator, grew stronger, and the heart became purer, as it neared the fount of all purity. At last, the pen dropped from the nerveless fingers, and the glowing thoughts faded in the senseless brain. The minstrel was at rest in heaven.

As I stand beside this sleeping form, lying calmly beneath the moonlit heaven, I cannot but remember how beautiful was her character, made perfect through suffering. She saw light after light of earthly joy go out on life's highway, wave after wave swept over her bark, yet calmly she stood, and, guiding it through the troubled waters, moored it in safety where storm can never reach it more.

Oh, thou who hast been called to pass through the deep waters of affliction, learn a lesson of

hope, patience, and resignation, from Anna
Heyward's now finished life !

“ Fear not in a world like this,
And thou shalt know ere long,
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong.”

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AUNT SOPHIE'S VISITS.—NO. VII.

BY LUCY N. GODFREY.

"WELL, mother, I find that I must go to B—to-morrow," said Mr. Laselle, cheerfully, as he stood in the sitting-room, waiting the sound of the tea-bell.

"And, if I interpret your tone of voice rightly, you wish the company of your wife for the journey," replied Aunt Sophie, smiling.

"Not quite so fast. Pray, what would you do at a city hotel while I must be doing business? Would you not prefer giving your brother and his family a glad surprise at W—?"

"Indeed I should. Thank you for thinking of it."

As Mr. and Mrs. Laselle stepped from the cars at W—, on the following day, the latter exclaimed—

"There's Howard, yonder, talking with the tall, pale gentleman. How grave they both look!"

Just then, however, the gladness flashed upon his face, like light upon a noble picture, and he advanced rapidly to greet his sister and her husband.

"Don't stop to talk to me now," said Mrs. Laselle, as she shook his hand cordially, "for Charles is going on directly."

"Are you, Charles? Then let me introduce my friend Wells to you, and do you give him some of your never-failing fund of cheerfulness, for he sadly needs it."

Mr. Wells came forward at the beck of his friend, who had barely time to introduce the gentlemen, and express his pleasure at seeing them together, when the peremptory "All aboard!" warned them to their places.

As the train moved away, and the brother and sister seated themselves in the waiting carriage, Mr. Wilmot said—

"I cannot easily express the pleasure which this chance meeting of my friend with Charles gives me. Wells is going to the city to consult an eminent physician; but his disease will defy the power of medicine, unless care be taken to raise his spirits."

"Does his ill health cause his melancholy?" inquired Aunt Sophie.

"O no; he was well and strong till, about a year ago, his only child, a daughter just in the bloom of maidenhood, died. He had, a brief time before, retired from business, and, upon

her death, he gave himself so wholly to his grief that his own health was undermined. For his wife's sake, he has tried various remedies, but nothing seems to do him any good."

"Of course not; he must go out of himself, and take a hearty interest in something, if he would be well again. An invalid can never afford to be selfish."

"Well, Charles will help him to a glimpse of the bright side of this world, I think, and one cannot tell how much good that may do. But I have not yet told you how delighted I am to have you here. I am unusually glad, and that is saying a great deal, for the sight of your bonnie face is always as welcome to me as that of the sun after a long rain. Only last evening we were wishing that you did not live so far away."

"I cannot realize the distance, since, until about this time yesterday, I have had no thought of seeing you this season, and now I am here, expecting to hear you tell me of your wife and daughter. Has Clara got rid of the influenza, which was troubling her when she wrote?"

"O yes, and fallen upon a worse distemper, I believe; but I have no patience to tell you of it. The truth is, I have been seeing breakers ahead. My wife will represent our case; it takes a woman to talk of such matters. Unfortunately—at least, so I have been thinking lately—a man must feel when his own daughter is concerned. However, I guess you will see clear water—you were always famous for that—and I am ready to follow your lead. Helen, too, has complete confidence in your judgment."

"But Clara? I thought your anxiety was for her, not for your wife?"

"True enough, the silly child; but I think I should easily manage her case, if her mother would not persist in regarding her as entitled to pity, indulgence, and all that sort of thing. You see—though I did not mean to tell you a word about it—Helen and I never had so serious a disagreement in all of our married life before, as we are in now, just about that child."

"I hope you are not expecting me to step between you as an umpire," said Aunt Sophie, in surprise.

"O no, nothing of that sort. There is no unkind feeling between us. If you just show Helen that she is wrong, she will yield so gracefully that I shall only love her better for the mistake she has made."

"And what if I see that my respected brother is wrong?" said Aunt Sophie, archly.

"I am afraid you will have a pretty hard subject for your logic, though I will try to hold myself open to conviction," was the rejoinder, as the carriage stopped.

Mrs. Wilmot and her daughter greeted Aunt Sophie with charming cordiality; but the animated conversation of the group would have little interest for us, my reader.

The evening was fast wearing away, when Mr. Wilmot said that, as he had been an idler during the afternoon, he must leave them for a little time. A few moments later, Clara, who, since the first exclamations of delighted surprise, which had evinced her joy at the coming of her aunt, had become gradually taciturn and absent-minded, abruptly bade her companions "Good-night," and left the room.

Mrs. Wilmot sighed, as she said: "Our merry-hearted Clara is scarcely herself, of late; but I suppose I ought not to wish her to remain always a child."

"No, indeed," replied Aunt Sophie, "but I would have her retain her childish buoyancy of spirits. She will need that all through life."

"Yes, and I hope she will be happier by and by. I try all I can to comfort her now, but she is so fearful of displeasing her father, and he, I must say, though perhaps I should not, seems perfectly regardless of her feelings."

"How? Her father would not wilfully grieve her?"

"Certainly not, but he will persist in considering her as a child. She is very favorably impressed by, if not absolutely in love with, a gentleman against whom Mr. Wilmot has some prejudice. I cannot persuade him to believe that this may involve Clara's future happiness, since he has told her that she must look out that young Grey never calls here again, unless she wishes him forbidden to come. Mr. Wilmot knows that Clara will not disobey him, and he thinks this command will wholly settle the matter. I wish it might, I am sure." And the fond mother's eyes were dim with tears.

"Tell me something of this Grey," said Aunt Sophie. "Do you like his appearance?"

"Yes, I confess that I do. He is very good-looking, has agreeable manners, and has been very gentlemanly in his attentions to Clara, as well as pleasantly deferential to me."

"What fault does Howard find with him?"

"Oh, he says his character is unsound and lacks a foundation; but he does not care to say much against the young man, since it is enough for him that Clara is altogether too young to know whom she does like. He tells her to forget Grey, and he thinks she will obey him. She tries to do so, but every effort strengthens her woman's nature, and, I verily believe, she has a much stronger feeling for Grey than she would have done, had nothing been said to her, any way."

"Very likely. I suppose, however, that you say as little as possible upon the subject?"

"Why, I don't know. I like Grey, and Clara knows it, and she seems to like to talk of him."

"And you, too, enjoy the conversations, which carry your thoughts back to your own girlhood, and gratify your womanly love of romance, if I mistake not?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Wilmot, hesitatingly. "I value Clara's confidence, and she is very frank with me. Now that Mr. Grey no longer comes here, she always tells me when she meets him, and often what he says."

"How old is Clara?" said Aunt Sophie, abruptly, as her brother entered.

"She will be eighteen next month," was her mother's reply.

Mrs. Laselle looked to her brother with a meaning smile, as she said: "Howard, I am thinking you need to learn something more than you know of a woman's nature."

"There is no one from whom I would more willingly take a lesson upon the subject than yourself. Will you favor me to-night?"

"I can tell you, to-night, that a girl very rarely likes to be treated as a child at eighteen, particularly if she loves."

"But Clara's silly fancy is not love. Such a man as Herbert Grey is not capable of inspiring a girl of Clara's good sense with a real passion."

"Nevertheless," said Aunt Sophie, seriously, "very sensible and intelligent girls have loved very noble ideals, and imagined they found them realized in very worthless men. Miss Bremer's 'pale lady married to a dream' may be found in more than one assembly."

"You would not imply that Clara will marry Grey? She shall not; I will never con—"

"Stop, Howard," Mrs. Laselle interposed, "make no rash speeches; they are never profitable."

"You do not surely believe that Clara would marry without my consent?"

"No, I do not, for I could neither call that young lady sensible nor intelligent who would marry against the will of a kind father; but, as I understand the present state of things, you may be ready with your consent, even against your better judgment."

"It seems impossible!" was Mr. Wilmot's ejaculated response.

"Let us see! Helen and Clara are both prepossessed in favor of the young man. They hardly dare think, as yet, that you are harsh or unfeeling, but they are sure you know nothing of the strength of the feelings you oppose. Your wife and daughter exert a constant influence over you, for you will very soon miss the wonted cheerfulness of your home. Clara will be sure that she can never be happy while you are unjust to him who has chosen her before all others, and, by and by, you will begin to believe that 'love is blind,' and you *may* be disposed to make the best of the matter by yielding."

"But what would you have me do? Shall I make no exertion to save our chief treasure?"

"Yes, but do not content yourself with so general an accusation of Mr. Grey as that his character has no foundation."

"You would not have me report all his foolish speeches and little meannesses?"

"No, I would prefer your giving your wife and daughter a chance to see for themselves. Do not prevent Clara's seeing him except for brief interviews, at rare intervals. Let her meet him as she meets your friends, and she will more correctly judge of his character."

"What? Shall I offer no opposition to his suit?"

"Yes, but let it be careful and gentlemanly. It has been said that, 'if you would hasten a match, oppose it;' and I have heard the remark cited as proving the obstinacy of girls in love. Girls are not obstinate, but overdone opposition defeats itself, by making the persecuted lover seem better than he is. Every fault which is wrongfully laid to his charge reveals a virtue; while his opportunities for showing a forgiving spirit are excellent capital for an artful lover."

"What shall I do?"

"I can scarcely tell you. It is your duty to give careful thought to the subject. Of this, however, I am sure—no kind father should neglect an opportunity for cultivating the acquaintance of him who would be his son-in-law. You gentlemen judge of each other much better than women can do. We depend upon our intuitions, and a handsome face and win-

ning address, though it may be an artful one, often put these at fault."

"But I have become sufficiently acquainted with Grey to dislike him."

"Then, tell Helen and Clara of your dislike, but respect their liking as you would have your dislike respected. Invite him to your house as your guest, not as Clara's, and let her hear your conversation as gentlemen. Invite him here, too, to meet friends. Give her opportunities for becoming acquainted with his real character. She must meet him in general society. Let her meet him here, and these chance meetings will cause no embarrassment. Her reason will be oftener on the watch, and, if he be playing a part to win her esteem, she will soon catch him off his guard. Let her youth be an excuse for declining marked attentions from any one. You had better devote your evenings to attending her to concerts, lectures, and parties, than allow her to accompany one in whom you have not perfect confidence. By such thoughtful care for her happiness as I would recommend, you will increase Clara's love for you, and make her even more anxious to see her duty as you see it. If you treat her as a child, the lover, who meets her with the deference due to her as a woman, will have more influence than he can do if you, too, rely upon her judgment, and study to meet the demands for incitements to expansion of her earnest human soul. Helen, too," continued Aunt Sophie, turning to Mrs. Wilmot, who had been a silent, but interested listener, "has her duty in this matter. As I have said to Howard that he must give you opportunities for judging impartially young Grey, I would say to you, be careful that you lose no chance for thus judging. Learn his principles, note how he speaks of women, and be sure that he is a noble, unselfish man, before you encourage Clara to talk of him. Do not let her artless reports of pleasant attentions remind you of times in the past. But I did not think to say so much. You must talk the matter over together; I think there is little doubt of your both being misled, if you strive earnestly to judge wisely. Marriage must be, in a measure, a lottery, so long as there are so many blanks in woman's garb, and such a multitude of worse than blanks wearing the guise of men; but I trust that we may never see a loved child unworthily mated, and feel that we have been culpably careless concerning her fate."

"I acknowledge," said Mrs. Wilmot, "that I never before realized that I had so clear a duty about it. I have been content with call-

ing marriage a lottery, and hoping that my loved one would draw a prize, though I have seen nothing which I could do to help her, and, perhaps, have not tried to see."

"You remind me of a bit of advice I heard Charles giving a young friend, as she was about starting for her distant home. He bade her take her seat in about the centre car of the train, or in the last, if there were but two; and when she asked if it would not be too selfish to be looking for her own safety when all would be equally anxious for the comparatively safe seats, he told her never to mind about the others, but take care of herself, for there would be enough of the thoughtless or ignorant who would sit just as contentedly in those more dangerous places, and, if maimed for life, in a partial 'smash-up,' would never realize that there was a reason for those in the centre cars escaping unhurt. So I would tell you that there will be thoughtless ones to fill the forward car of impulse and passion, as well as the laggard one of selfish, worldly calculation; but do you see that Clara is between them, in the place to which prayerful prudence would assign her, and then ask God's blessing on her future, for even the centre may not stand unharmed in a general wreck."

When Mr. Wilmot and his daughter met, the following morning, he said—

"Clara, I have been thinking the matter over, and I see that you have as good a right to your opinions as I to mine, till one of us has convinced the other; so I shall invite your friend Grey here occasionally, to visit me, this year, but if he is the man you think him to be, he may come to see you next. You will distrust him a little now, because I do; but, if I find him better than I have supposed him to be, I will gladly acknowledge it. If, on the contrary, you are disappointed in him, you will be glad that I have not allowed your name to be coupled with his by the gossips. I shall invite him here to meet your Uncle Charles, upon his return."

"Thank you, father; I am sure you will like Mr. Grey, if you become acquainted with him. I don't wish to be anything but your little girl at present; but, you know, I did not like to have Herbert's feelings injured by being forbidden to come, and, besides, father, I did not quite like to have you think me so foolish."

"We misunderstood each other. I have the greatest confidence in your judgment, where you have an opportunity for comparing."

This brief conversation seemed to dissipate all Clara's trouble, and she joined her mother

in her efforts to make Aunt Sophie's visit a pleasant one.

When Mr. Laselle returned, he was accompanied by Mr. Wells.

"I have brought my physician with me. Does not my improved appearance do credit to his skill?" was the latter's greeting to Mr. Wilmot; and he hastened to introduce his companions as his niece and her husband, Dr. Jewett.

There was, indeed, an almost magical change in the gentleman, as he gave an animated account of the little white globules which had had so marvellous an effect. It appeared that Dr. Jewett, who was the son of a friend of Mr. Laselle's, had gained an extensive practice in the town of C—, before his marriage. His wife, however, found the sea air too bracing, and he foresaw the necessity of his ultimately seeking another home, though his present journey had been taken merely for the purpose of leaving her in some healthy inland town to board, for a time. Mr. Laselle first saw them at a depot where the cars were delayed for a connecting train, which was behind time. He presented Mr. Wells, and that gentleman almost immediately asked the lady's maiden name. Upon being told, he said—

"I thought so; you are my niece. Do you not remember anything of your Uncle Henry?"

Mrs. Jewett did remember many things concerning him, and her pleasant recollections of his home, as she had visited it in her childhood, interested him.

When Dr. Jewett asked if he could have sufficient confidence in him to take some little white globules for the headache from which he was suffering, he took them readily, and, as the cars were about starting, he seated himself by his niece, whom he found a very agreeable companion.

An hour later, when Dr. Jewett inquired concerning his headache, he had wholly forgotten it, but had thought of something better, he said, and abruptly proposed that, instead of looking for a temporary home for Mrs. Jewett, he should come with her to W—. "I may as well try you," he urged, "as that famous Dr. G—. Your little doses will not be very hard to take, at all events, and Mr. Laselle here thinks you will cure me. There is a fine opening for a physician, just now, in W—, for we have lately lost two, and you cannot do better than to take advantage of it."

Mr. Wells was really in earnest with his plan, and Dr. Jewett did not require very much persuading to partially agree to it. He was,

however, anxious to visit the city, and Mr. Wells, who had accepted some commissions, was willing. He took his "sugar plums," as he called them, each day, and devoted the greater part of the time, when the other gentlemen were occupied, to visiting objects of interest with niece. Dr. Jewett requested him to be as cheerful as possible when with the lady, and his unselfish thought for her good was of great advantage to him.

Mrs. Wilmot proposed a party, to introduce Mr. and Mrs. Laselle to their friends; but her husband objected. His plan was to insure an old-fashioned evening visit from Mr. Wells and Dr. Jewett, with their ladies, by inviting them to come to tea, and remain in the evening. He chose to invite Mr. Grey, for the evening only. Aunt Sophie noticed the eager delight with which Clara anticipated the evening. She was pleased to learn that the young girl had often listened with lively interest to the conversations of her father and Mr. Wells upon politics and other subjects of general interest; for she saw that Clara had thus gained an ideal of a gentleman which no characterless youth would be likely to meet.

Herbert Grey congratulated himself upon receiving an invitation to spend an evening at Mr. Wilmot's. He had tried earnestly to win the affections of Clara, and, in his day-dreams, she figured as his wife, although he had no particular love for her. In truth, though he could talk very flippantly of the sentiment, and quote some of the sweetest poetry, he had little faith in it as a reality. He thought Clara a pretty, lively girl, who would bring him fortune enough to pay his bills for some time, and would manage his house with care. He did not object to hearing her talk enthusiastically, as she often did, of the duties of life; though he had not the slightest sympathy with her. He intended to offer her his precious self, so soon as he could hope for the approval of her parents, and then all her duties would be owing to him. Now, he took some pains to read the books she admired, and frequent the church she attended, that he might make himself agreeable to her; but he anticipated the time when no such care to "humor her notions" would be necessary.

We will not attempt to record the pleasant conversation, which, commencing at the tea-table, met no interruption till the arrival of Mr. Grey. The ladies occasionally joined in it, but were mostly interested, appreciating listeners. Clara enjoyed it as a rare intellectual treat, and, as she listened, hoped that Herbert Grey might come early. He did so, and Mr. Wil-

mot, after presenting him to his friends, told him the subject of conversation, when Mr. Wells repeated the remark he had just made, and was followed by an animated rejoinder from Dr. Jewett. Mr. Grey was not interested, and soon took a seat near Clara, saying, in an undertone, that he disliked these general conversations; he should much prefer hearing only her own sweet voice. The remark was intended as complimentary, but it jarred sadly upon her feelings, and she answered, rather coolly, that, as he had come on purpose to make the acquaintance of her friends, he must not neglect the opportunity. After this, he gave his attention to the speakers, and often spoke himself; but the companionship was evidently not congenial. The contrast between the two younger gentlemen was too strongly marked to be overlooked by the most careless observer. Dr. Jewett was less of a conservative in his views than his elder friends, but his every word had weight; while Mr. Grey made light speeches upon serious subjects, and seemed to have no views of his own.

After the departure of their guests, as Mrs. Wilmot was saying that she had been disappointed in Grey, her husband interrupted her with the remark that she must have failed to notice his gallantry in folding Mrs. Wells' shawl, and gracefully laying it upon her shoulders; adding that, if he was an adept at such accomplishments, he must be a captivating man among the girls. Clara blushed, and Aunt Sophie remarked that most girls would be willing their lovers should first learn to fold shawls for their shoulders, though few would care to teach them to converse rationally, and then changed the subject, as she was sure that Clara's own thoughts would, just then, be her best monitors.

After his daughter left the room, Mr. Wilmot asked Aunt Sophie's opinion of Mr. Grey. She replied:—

"I think you were right when you said his character lacks a foundation. It is evident he has no fixed principles. He may, if he wins a good wife, make a respectable member of society; but he is quite as likely to fall before the first temptation to an evil course."

"Do you now think that Clara loves him?"

"She doubtless loves what she has imagined him to be, though, perhaps, his chief claim to her interest is founded upon the fact that she believes he loves her ardently, and she is responsible for a powerful influence over him. I think you need have no anxiety about her on his account, for he will not persevere in a suit where he has the approval of three to win, and she

will be glad when he discontinues attentions which will, ere long, be distasteful to her."

Two years later, Mr. and Mrs. Laselle received a pressing invitation from Clara to be present at her wedding. "Come as long as possible before the important day, dear auntie," she wrote, "that you may become acquainted with Clarence. I know you liked Dr. Jewett; his brother is even superior to him, father says, and you may be sure I believe him with my whole heart."

There were no "breakers ahead" to mar the joy of this visit. Mr. and Mrs. Wilnot had perfect confidence in Clarence Jewett, and felt that they were not losing a daughter, but gaining a noble son. Clara was a proud, happy bride, looking up to her gifted husband with a love that was founded upon respect. Mr. and Mrs. Wells, too, welcomed our friends to W—, and Aunt Sophie's quick sympathies were awakened to their joys. Mr. Wells had persuaded Dr. Jewett to occupy a part of his large mansion, and thus it had again become a cheerful home. He had sought the welfare of his niece, and had reaped a rich reward of happiness for himself, in that she was like a daughter to him, while for her winning little Henry, his heart expanded with a new, happyfying love.

Shall we turn from this bright picture to glance after Herbert Grey? As Aunt Sophie was looking over the tasteful cards of invitation for the wedding party, she saw the address of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Grey.

"Mr. Grey is married, then?" she remarked to Clara.

"O yes," she replied, "he married in less than six months after you were here. A charming young heiress came to visit an aunt, and, as he had already grown tired of trying to talk with father, he played the agreeable to her. She, poor girl, had no friends to help her to see how shallow he was, and therefore married him. Her wealth has proved a snare to his feet, and he is fast dissipating it in fast living. We should not invite him here, were it not that we pity his poor wife, who is already slighted upon his account. I am sure I ought to feel sympathy for her, for I can realize how completely she was deceived."

Since her marriage, Clara Jewett has not escaped all trial, but every sorrow has linked her heart more closely with that of her noble life companion, who cheers and encourages her mid everyday duties, as well as shares and heightens all her best thoughts and holiest aspirations.

Centre-Table Gossip.

BOARDING-SCHOOL EVILS.

In glancing over the prospectus of a school, one among the many we are constantly receiving, we note especially a legislation with regard to simplicity in dress and ornament. It is quite time that the subject received marked attention; teachers make rules against the introduction of sweetmeats and pastry, confiscating any stray packages that their pupils attempt to smuggle in by way of solace for home dainties, they cut off the supply of light literature, but allow whole trunks of finery to pass quietly into the atmosphere they are endeavoring to purify from all moral poisons.

"Well, how do you like your new school?" we remember hearing a mother say to a Miss of twelve, just entered at a seminary so celebrated that the application for a vacancy had been made a year before.

"School's well enough; but I'm not going back there again until I have a brooch. There isn't a single girl there, but me, without a brooch; I was ashamed all day."

That was the first advance in education. A mother's natural vanity speaks when she furnishes a costly wardrobe for her child. "Eliza is going off among strangers, and I want her to feel that she is as good as anybody." So Eliza has a dress hat, a new set of furs, a costly cloak, and an ample variety of dresses and embroideries, cultivating her self-importance on the start, and helping her to a character for ostentation and display, ending in personal vanity with its train of evil consequences.

But this is a trivial wrong; like all moral evils, it has its contagion. Eliza's room-mate, Lucy, is made unhappy by the great contrast in their respective wardrobes, and consequently in the estimation in which her school-mates hold her. The vacation is made miserable by her complaints and "why-can't-I-haves?" and finally her mother, who can ill afford even the ordinary expenses of the school, stints herself still further to purchase various unnecessary additions to her daughter's wardrobe.

We well know that there can be but one ruling passion,

and as vanity and all that goes to feed it, dress and jewelry especially, is the besetting sin of a school-girl's life, we can but wonder at the blindness that ministers to it deliberately, instead of uprooting any weed of temptation from the path. The rivalries of dress, furniture, and equipage, that make up so much of our social life, begin in the school-room with Eliza's Christmas set of pink coral and Lucy's ill-gotten flounced silk—ill-gotten, since it was purchased with the sum that should have given her mother a comfortable shawl or the children their bird's-eye aprons. School education is made expensive enough, in these days of "extras" and universal accomplishments, without the heavy dry-good and milliners' bills that grow out of it. Not that children should be dressed meanly and tastelessly on principle; that would have the same effect; but, when they are suitably clad, teach them to be independent of the public opinion of the school-room, and cultivate sufficient firmness to deny them, if they have not attained it.

INDIA SHAWLS.

THE passion for India shawls still continues, and, in fact, is greater than ever. The daily prints advertise them in all manner of attractiveness; and one scarcely meets an acquaintance without an India scarf spread over her shoulders. Not that they all come honestly by their name, not at all. A very large part sold under the far-famed title have never travelled farther than France, and the odor of sandal-wood, blindly relied on, and so zealously kept up by the purchaser, is contracted in the sandal-lined chest of the American shop in which it was purchased.

Judges of the article pretend to say, however, that the real India shawl can be detected by its having a less evenly woven web, as also from its brighter colors. It is likewise said that the border of the genuine Cashmere shawl is invariably woven in small pieces, which are afterwards sewed together, as the whole border is subsequently sewed on to the centre. But other authorities deny that the skill of India is insufficient to brooch a shawl—in other words, to weave the border and centre in one piece, or run the pattern of the former over the latter. Almost invariably, however, those that are imported come out with the borders and centres separate; and the price paid for a real Cashmere in Paris or London is almost fabulous, a long shawl costing from \$1000 to \$5000, according to the quality. Nor is this exorbitant, when the actual expense of producing it is considered. In the first place, the wool itself is very costly. The animals from which the material is obtained are covered by nature with two kinds of coats for clothing—the one fine, curly, generally gray, and imparting to the skin a down more or less thick, as if to guard it against cold and damp; the other coarse, lank, and giving a general color to the animal—and as it is only the inner and finer coating which is used for the fine shawls, the quantity produced is limited, and, therefore, high-priced.

The down, called *poshm*, is collected from flocks of goats on the plains of Thibet, and brought to the confines of Cashmere on the backs of sheep. It is then cleaned, and one-fourth of it—being all that is fitted for the shawls—is carried on men's backs the remainder of the distance to Cashmere. When arrived at Cashmere, it passes into the hands of the merchants, who sell it in small quantities to the weavers, at the rate of about two rupees per pound. The thread is dyed a great variety of colors, and then stiffened with rice-water. Many articles are woven with these colored threads, the process

being slow and tedious, on account of the rude construction of the looms. Shawls, coverlets, handkerchiefs, turban-pieces, gloves, socks, and other garments are woven of this *joshin*. The shawls are washed after being woven, to remove the rice-stiffening, and a fine pale yellow color is imparted by means of sulphur fumes. To make a pair of large and handsome Cashmere shawls requires the labor of twelve or fourteen men for half a year.

Now, it is very seldom that there are fortunes in this country large enough to sustain such an investment; therefore, the French manufacturers and the American importers very generously burden their consciences with an imposition, and the French-India draperies sell readily enough at prices ranging from one to five hundred dollars—quite a difference. They look much richer and feel softer, of course, under the name, and they have the shadow of a claim to it, in fact, for the wool is from the same species of goat, that has been acclimated in this country and in England, and the style has been exactly copied by the ingenuity of French designers, who give us the same well-known patterns that have been handed down from generation to generation of Hindoos. English shawls grow more desirable every year, and are comparatively inexpensive. The superfine Thibets, or Cashmères, manufactured at Huddersfield, and sold at from 15s. to 21s. per yard, are equal in delicacy and softness of texture to those imported from the north of India.

Shawls which require borders are supplied with them in London, the borders being made of all patterns at Paisley, Edinburgh, and Norwich, at those places borders being a considerable and particular branch of manufacture. A good Paisley shawl is now almost as highly valued as a real Cashmere.

A CHARITY THAT BEGINS AT HOME.

PEOPLE who are not inclined to be generous towards those outside of their family or connections are always ready to tell you that "charity begins at home," which is true; and, so far as money and its expenditure are concerned, people are not generally slow in acting up to the proverb. But there is a charity which falls oftenest to those immediately about us.

"The withholding of a word" is often of far, far more service than the delivery of a homily. In our daily intercourse we become acquainted with the peculiar dispositions and infirmities of those around us; we know where

"The wall is weak and the breach is wide,"

and this very knowledge may be turned to inestimable account. It may not always be judicious to improve these failings directly—a thousand circumstances may forbid such a line of conduct; but, by avoiding all provocation as regards these particular tendencies, by bearing and forbearing, we may gain such an ascendancy over the mind of our friend as to be enabled, in the course of time, to direct his attention insensibly to the point of danger, and, almost unperceived by him or others, to induce him to subdue the evil which threatens the peace of the circle in which he moves; and, in the case of these slight idiosyncrasies, which we all possess, such a course of self-denying action will preserve harmony where otherwise "confusion worse confounded" would be the result.

Above all, husband and wife should know how to "withhold the word" that may be just and true enough, but, if unnecessary, is certain to be as fuel to the flame of anger or irritation already kindled. Many a bitter

scene of retort and recrimination might be saved, if the most self-possessed, although the offended party, can only remember, "where no wood is, the fire goeth out."

NOTES AND QUERIES.

1. *How to Give Children Old School Medicines.*—Where their use is yet retained in families, this is often a difficult and serious question. Young children—that is to say, babies—do not often dislike castor oil, and we have known children from three to four years old as ready for their "cod-liver" draught as if it had been lemonade. Babies will take oil best in half a cup of pretty warm water sweetened with sugar. The oil floats on the surface, and is easily skimmed off with a spoon. Chocolate panada is highly recommended as a vehicle for drugs, especially iron. It is simply chocolate prepared with water and thickened with crumbs of bread. Calomel should never be given in jelly; honey is preferable, and the child should drink after it to rouse the gums. A death is said to have occurred from administering calomel in jelly, from the chemical change induced by its mixture with the acid. Ipecacuanha may be given in either honey or chocolate panada.

2. *Who was Wallenstein?*—A celebrated Austrian general, born in the year 1583. He possessed immense riches, and was the largest landed proprietor in Bohemia, excepting the Emperor. A large portion of it was obtained by purchasing, at much less than their value, the confiscated property of attainted nobles. He became owner, in this way, of sixty-seven estates, worth £800,000. He lived in a style of princely luxury, and dazzled all who beheld his splendor and magnificence. He was not only a general, but became also banker to the Emperor Ferdinand the Second, who overwhelmed him with honors and rewards, and repaid him one debt with the Principality of Mecklenburg. He received, also, the title of General of the Baltic and Oceanic Seas.

3. *How to Order Books from a Distance.*—Several volumes on the list we offer to send to any subscriber. Almost all publishers now advertise to send their books free of postage charge, on receipt of the price. The best way, when a number of volumes are desired, is to order them through the package agency of the Lady's Book, or to send the list to any well-known publisher, inclosing the price of the books, and have them forwarded by express. Harper, Ticknor, Appleton, Randolph, Scribner, or any of the houses whose books are noticed in our magazine from month to month, would attend to the matter.

4. *Fifty Dollar Sewing Machines.*—We can recommend any of the regular manufacturers. Wheeler & Wilson and Singer have machines at this price that answer every purpose for use, though they are not ornamental; in real value they are the same. For seventy-five dollars a pretty and really ornamental piece of furniture will be sent.

5. *Madame Clement's School*, at Beverly, New Jersey, is the one in which the pupils pass their evenings in the parlor with their teacher, exactly as if in a home circle. Study and recitations are all accomplished in the day. Sewing, reading aloud, music, and conversation are the occupations of the parlor. We think it a most admirable, as well as a novel plan. Young girls are usually too much crowded and hurried. We also notice another valuable item in the rules of this "home-school": "*Moderation and simplicity of dress are expected to prevail, and parents are earnestly requested not to furnish their daughters with jewelry.*"

COUSIN ANNIE HASTINGS' LETTERS.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

THE days of this dying year are going over my head, dear Cousin Lucy, with their pallid, death-struck faces. Their voices are low moanings and mutterings of winds. They have no gifts of beauty, no breaths of fragrance, no sound of songs, only what every mortal must have who falls into the winter of life—old age, decay, death! Still, by all the gifts of gladness, and beauty which this year brought to me in the days of its youth, in the strength of its manhood, in the glory of its ripened age, I cling to it with memories grateful and tender. The leap of its running brooks is in my heart; its embroidery of flowers, its sunrises of pearly gray and fluted pink, its sunsets, like great halls with crimson hangings and silver pillars, are still before my eyes; its spring, its summer, its autumn are pictures hung up on the parlor walls of my memory. The smile, the sensible, half amused smile, that is dawning around your lips, as you read this rhapsody, rises before my eyes; but I do not dread it, oh, kind and tender heart, whose very rebuses were to me caresses; and, having paid my acknowledgments to the year, I will now pay something better to yourself.

Well, it is decided I shall pass the winter here at Rydal Hill; I am not sorry now, though I was a little when the doctor said my lungs would not be strong enough to inhale a draught of sea air before next May. "I shall not allow you to leave me better, but well, Miss Hastings," he said; and, God willing, I think his words

will be fulfilled, for, looking in the mirror, I am hardly able to identify myself. It does not seem as if those rounded cheeks, with the bloom on them which is born of morning walks, could belong to me, or this light, rapid figure the slow, feeble one I brought here. You pity me, dear heart, because you think I must be lonely, away off in the "hill country," a hundred miles from New York and the appliances and excitements of city life. Not one bit of it. We have quite as choice society as I ever found in the city—cultivated men and women, who have not only seen life, but "lived" it, and whose vision has grown clearer, and whose experience has nourished and expanded their souls—in the calm of the country.

Uncle and Aunt Stebbins have grown to look upon me as their own child, and I feel towards them much, I believe, as an adopted daughter should—a daughter who knows both her parents are in heaven. It isn't "gloomy" here, either; and you are fretting yourself quite needlessly, I do assure you, over my state and condition. Every pleasant day brings some advent of agreeable guests to the "house on the hill." Then we have frequent rides, and parties, and all sorts of amusements. From my heart, I am happy! Just now, the house is a little too lively for me, for Uncle Joshua was nominated county sheriff last week. Aunt Jemima, dear, kind, motherly soul, was considerably gratified with the honor, albeit she said, with a little anxious shake of her head and the snowy cap thereof: "I don't

know what you'll do when farming-time comes, Joshua, with all this business on hand."

"Oh, we must give up all private cares for the good of the public, you know, mother." And Uncle Joshua's deep, hearty laugh followed, which always reminds me of our old Saxon fathers, with their flagons of ale.

I, too, have been laughing this morning, a laugh made up of many emotions, not all glad ones; or, perhaps, the laugh was the ebullition of the topmost emotion, underlying which lay many deep and solemn ones.

This morning, Deacon Walters' wife and Mrs. Dr. Parsons called to see aunt, and of course I had to be duly marshalled into the parlor. Something summoned aunt away, and I was obliged to entertain the ladies; and, for want of something better to converse about, I went into the sitting-room in quest of a cover I had just been knitting for Uncle Joshua's arm-chair, and, as the door was a little ajar, I overheard Mrs. Parsons say to Mrs. Walters:—

"How very agreeable she is, isn't she?"

"Oh, very, but, then, she's an *old maid*!"

Mrs. Walters said it in just the tone I should have said, "She's blind, or dumb, or insane"—a tone of half wondering pity and sympathy, which we give to the especially afflicted and unfortunate of our race. So, when the good ladies took leave, I ran up stairs, and these words of Mrs. Walters's came with me. There's no doubt they were the solemn truth, Lucy, well beloved. My last birthday made me thirty-three, and nobody will attempt to controvert the fact that this entitles me to that most obnoxious appellation, however much my friends assure me that my appearance denies that I am twenty-five.

Yes, I am an "old maid," and, what is more, I have no wish, hope, or expectation of ever changing my condition. You know I do not say this from any false ideas of womanly delicacy, and that I should not write it without it was an earnest, settled conviction with me; and you have acuteness enough to fancy this determination was not reached without some cause or experience which produced it. You are right, Lucy; and now that our hearts have grown so closely together, now that, for six years, we have known and loved each other with a love which I find is not often given to sisters, I feel that herein I owe you my confidence. If you have ever suspected anything of my secret, you have never attempted to penetrate it. Delicately, persistently, during all our intimacy, you have respected the "innermost"

of my soul, and now you shall pass—where no other ever will—over its threshold.

Do you recall a visit we made together, some four years ago, to a certain picture gallery, where several valuable paintings just received from Italy were on exhibition for a few days? As we stood rapt in admiration, before the beautiful, touching face of a "Magdalene weeping amid her hair," a voice startled us both—"Miss Hastings, is it possible?" We turned round, and confronted a gentleman—I say this in such meaning as Tennyson or Kingsley would, a gentleman by the grace of God! He was not tall nor handsome, but his face and figure were manly and forcible. I think he appeared glad to see me, more so than I did him. I remember the deep, steady eyes searched my face with something of wonder, and doubt, and curiosity, which I could altogether comprehend; and I think you, with your quick intentions, *felt* there was something of embarrassment and concealed feeling in this sudden interview, though that impression may now have passed quite out of your mind. What we said—the gentleman and I—I have quite forgotten. I presume it was a few commonplace remarks about the weather, the state of our health, and some general information as to our respective localities. I think I must have remembered all the courtesies of the occasion, for I remember presenting him to you as a former friend of mine, Lieutenant Edward Reigh. While we were conversing, you may recollect that a gentleman friend of his came up, stating that the train started twenty minutes earlier than they had supposed, and it was now quite time to be going. I thought the gentleman took leave reluctantly. I thought if he could have furnished any reasonable excuse, or if my manner had invited it, he would have remained over that train; and he made his adieu with that impressive courtesy which no art ever conferred on Edward Reigh.

You turned round to me, Cousin Lucy, with your earnest eyes—"I like that man, Annie; I like his face, I like his manner. Who is he?"

"He was the son of the second wife of a cousin of my father's. I used to know him when we lived at Weyburgh."

"And never spoke to me of him. He is a man to impress one; a man once seen not to be easily forgotten. Was he married then?"

"No."

"Why, Annie, you are white as a ghost!"

"And dizzy and sick, too, Lucy. I must be going."

You were so alarmed for me that you forgot all about the gentleman. You remember I was ill for a week afterwards, and that the doctor insisted I had a fever hanging about me. Lucy, that man whom I met and parted with so quietly, was *the betrothed husband of my youth, and the only man whom my heart ever has, or ever will love*. You are growing pale, I know, as you read these words, and my hand is shaking while I write them, and my heart is saying to me it is best to tell the story quickly.

I was twenty when I first met Edward Reigh. He was then a student at West Point, and he came with his invalid mother and step-father, to pass a few days at our home. The relationship of our parents, and the very warm friendship which had always existed between them, furnished a basis for a cousinly freedom of intercourse, and Edward and I were soon on the best footing. They were pleasant days, Lucy, in the dear old home at Weyburgh, for papa was not so much of an invalid at that time as to excite any serious alarm on my part, and we had walks, and rides, and sails, among the grand old hill and lake scenery with which you have had the great joy to become acquainted. Edward was only twenty-three then, but his mind was remarkably mature for his age, and the extent of his reading and his general observation quite amazed me. He was full of humor, too, that bright, playful, sparkling humor which is the joyous effervescence of a strong, deep, large soul in its health and its youth. For the first time in my life, I was thrown into the society of a man of real power and muscle, of mind and character—a man who had, by gift of nature, *true dignity of soul*; a man whose will was, in its first youth, a nerve of iron, but whose heart was tender as a little child's; and whose kindly, chivalrous bearing towards all with whom he was thrown, was no social attainment, but the outward expression of inward grace and courtesy. It was impossible to know "Cousin Edward Reigh" without admiring and respecting him; at that time, I did this. One night, the last but one that our guests were to be with us, I went into the parlor and arranged some volumes on the table which had been displaced for our reading during the day. Cousin Edward followed me in a moment, and, playfully drawing my hands away from the books, said, "Come and sit down on the sofa with me, Cousin Annie; I want to talk with you." He looked in my face with his deep-set, searching eyes, not darting but steady in light.

"I want you to speak, not to look at me so," I said, at last, in that outspoken way you will

readily understand, though the gaze did not annoy—it only puzzled me.

"What do you want I should say to you, little Annie?" and somehow the voice, that clear, strong voice of his, seemed to caress my name.

"Tell me what you were thinking about, then."

"About you; and whether you will grant either of two petitions I have to make to you!"

"I guess I shall. You do not look like one who is used to having your petitions denied;" and I smiled in the young, manly face.

"The first is, that you will give me this;" and he drew out of his vest pocket a small daguerreotype likeness of myself, in a green velvet case.

"Why, Edward Reigh, where in the world did you get hold of this?"

"Your father was just showing it to mine, saying it was much like your mother at your age. Shall I keep it, Annie?"

"It is not mine. You must ask papa."

"I have, and he said I might retain the picture with your consent. Now, Annie, you won't refuse me."

"I can't very well, Cousin Edward."

"Then give it me—please;" and he laid the picture in my lap.

And I placed it in his hands, thinking to myself he would never do anything like anybody else.

"And now the other petition, Cousin Edward."

"You will write to me occasionally, when I have returned to my studies?"

"I will answer any letters you send me."

He leaned down and kissed my forehead, a slow, tremulous kiss; then there was a summons at the front door, and a few moments later company entered. I did not have another opportunity for private conversation with Edward Reigh during his visit.

Three years passed before we met again. Cousin Edward had been graduated for two of these, and travelled in Europe the remainder with his mother, whose health was rapidly sinking. She was a gentle, interesting woman, though I fancy Edward inherited the fibre of his character from his father. My own was at that time in declining health, though I did not yet apprehend he was in serious danger. It was summer time, again, and the light was on the hills, and the glory over all the earth. Edward and I met, cousins, friends, scarcely lovers, though I certainly thought more of him than

I did of any living man. We had correspondence regularly once a month, during these years; and if I had been as old and as wise as I am now, I should have read more than the words said in those letters. But I was young for my years, Cousin Lucy.

Edward Reigh came back to us his old self, improved and enlarged somewhat by foreign travel. He brought his mother with him; they remained at our house three weeks. Oh, Lucy, by all the joy, and light, and radiance of those days, every one of which afterwards turned a traitor that pierced my soul with great wounds, I cannot write of that time!

One day—he had been at our house about two weeks then—we went out to ride. You know what a coward I am behind a high-mettled horse, and this was a young one, scarcely broken in. Edward was a skilful driver, but we had not gone more than two miles before the animal suddenly took fright. It was very foolish for me to be so alarmed, for his driver could control him; but, before Edward saw what I was about, or before I comprehended myself, I had leaped from the carriage. Fortunately, I alighted on a little bank of grass on one side of the road, and I escaped with only a slight graze of the arm. In a moment, Edward had reined in his horse and dashed up to me. He was white as death, and the reins were clutched tightly in his hands, as he sprang from the carriage.

"O no, no, I was only frightened! Do—do forgive me, Cousin Edward!" And I burst into tears—tears of nervous excitement.

He sat down by me on the grass, and the horse stood subdued and panting before us.

"You were very imprudent to do this, Annie. Thank God, it did not kill you!"

He took off his hat, and bowed his head reverently, as he spoke the words.

"It might, mightn't it, Cousin Edward? Yes, thank God; for what would have become of papa?"

"You don't say what would have become of another, Annie."

"Oh, well, you wouldn't have been to blame, Cousin Edward."

"Yes, but what would have become of me?"

He repeated the words over several times, looking in my face, and yet his strong, muscular frame shivered from head to foot.

"Why, Edward, what *would* have become of you?" I articulated, in amazement, scarce knowing *what* I said.

"The life of my life would have been gone out!"

The steady, strong, glancing eyes looked straight into mine. I understood.

The rest, Cousin Lucy, is betwixt God and us; and not even for the glance of your loving eyes can the seals of that hour be broken by

ANNIE HASTINGS.

GRAFTON, December 11, 1857.

GOOD-MORROW to you, Cousin Lucy, though it is a day with pulse low beating, clammy, pallid, death-struck, like its sisters. I have fallen upon times of which I must write briefly, and your quick, deep intuitions will tell you much that my pen does not.

I went home that night the betrothed wife of Edward Reigh. I loved that man; oh, Lucy Dean, I loved him as you can divine I would love the man whom I had first respected and revered, who was the interpreter of all that was highest, and strongest, and noblest in manhood.

Edward remained a week longer at our house. Oh, hours embalmed in fragrance radiant with life's sunshine, melodious with its music. Of such was it not written, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away?"

My father was more than satisfied with my engagement; and when Mrs. Reigh took me to her heart, and called me the daughter of her old age, I felt that in a very little while I should soon have another mother in heaven. It was settled that we should be married the next September, my favorite season, just at the bridal of the summer and the autumn, and while the woods were kindling their crimson and yellow for the year's great wedding festival.

It became necessary for Mrs. Reigh to go to New York to consult her physician, and her son accompanied her. He intended to have been absent only a couple of weeks, but these were as many months. When Edward returned to us, his mother did not come with him. She never went with him anywhere again; but I love still to think her last message to me was a blessing on our betrothal—a prophesy that we two should come to her there!

Newton Gray and his sister Sybil were at our house at the time of Edward's arrival. I was sorry for it—human love is usually selfish. You have heard me speak of Newton Gray. Because his mother and my father had been old and warm friends, the latter consented, at her earnest solicitation, to receive him for two years into our family, when he was a youth and in delicate health; so he was a sort of pupil and *protégé* of my father's, and we were all attached to him, for he had a fine intellect,

a warm heart, and very winning social gifts. We were like brother and sister; and—I may be excused for saying to you what a woman has not often the right to say of a man whom she has not accepted—we might have been more than this. But, with all his fine qualities of head and heart, there was something lacking in the character of Newton Gray. I *felt* it then, I perceive it now. He lacked muscle, fibre of character; he had not a powerful will. Here I was stronger than he, and this unconsciously prevented my loving him; there would be no element of reverence in my affection for him. Yet he was, I believe, stronger, less governed by impulse than most men.

Sybil Gray was just my age, and we had previously exchanged visits with each other. She was an exceedingly pretty girl; she had bloom of complexion, and vivacity of expression, and rare grace of movement and manner; she was bright, sparkling, attractive, a favorite with her own sex, a greater with the other. I liked Sybil Gray, and she professed a warm attachment for me. Her character was susceptible, reflective, but I did not know her well enough to perceive that it lacked fortifying principle—that it had no strong basis of truth; in short, though full of warm, quick impulses, she was still thoroughly selfish. I believe she was interested in Edward the first time she met him, and she had acuteness enough to perceive the relation existing between us.

One day—it was the fourth after Edward's arrival—he had gone up to his room to answer some letters, and I was in the back parlor, reading a book. Suddenly, Newton Gray entered the room, and, dropping down on the floor beside me, laid his head in my lap, saying: "My head aches, Annie. Won't you soothe it as you used to?"

It was an old habit of his during the two years he had resided in our family; and I had by passing my fingers over his forehead, often soothed the pain in his head, but now I started at this brotherly freedom.

"Oh, Newton, you forget we are no longer boy and girl!"

"But we have the old hearts, Annie; at least I cannot believe yours is so changed that you will refuse to quiet these throbbings with the old soft touch of your fingers!"

What could I do under such circumstances? He laid his head back in my lap, and I pushed away the dark hair from his temples and passed my fingers over them. We were so engrossed in our conversation that we did not hear footsteps in the hall—footsteps that passed before

the door. These were Edward's, and we did not see either the look of surprise and displeasure which darkened his forehead and compressed his lips.

But Sybil Gray did; for a moment later, she wandered in from the garden with her apron full of freshly gathered flowers. As Edward's eyes met hers, she read the thought which troubled them, and she silently beckoned him to follow her out into the garden; and there and then Satan entered into the head of Sybil Gray.

"You are surprised to find my brother and Annie so intimate; but you know old lovers have privileges."

"Old lovers!" I do not understand you, Miss Gray;" but the man's lips were white.

"Don't understand me!" with a pretty start. "You surely know that Newton and Annie—" the soft, white fingers played with the tassels of her apron.

"Go on, Miss Gray."

"Well, promise me you will never divulge what I say to you; as, under any other circumstances than these, I should not betray Annie's confidence."

"I promise."

"Newton and she are engaged."

"Edward Reigh, hearing these words, gave no sign. What more passed between the two that afternoon, I never knew. I only know they talked long together, and that Sybil Gray was an artful woman, and she did her work well. We all met at tea as usual; and Edward informed me he must go to New York the next day. I hardly regretted this, for I supposed he would return the following week, and then my guests would be gone. Not that I was in the least degree jealous of Sybil; I had very little knowledge of the evil in human nature, and my faith in Edward was too near my faith in God. We had company to stay over night, so I had no opportunity for any private conversation with my betrothed, and therefore could observe no change in his manner.

Two days after Edward left, Sybil Gray pretended to have received letters from New York which rendered her immediate return necessary. She left in the care of one of our neighbors, and her brother remained. Lucy, Lucy, my heart aches, my brain bursts; I cannot write of this time! I know little about it, too. It is enough that I *shall*, when the books are opened *up there*, know all the foul wrong which you did to me, and which seared your own soul with a sin at whose hideousness I shudder, Sybil Gray!

I have every reason to suppose that Edward wrote me once or twice, as I did him more than this. His letters never reached me, mine probably never did him. Both must have been intercepted. Two months later, Edward Leigh and Sybil Gray were married.

The next day my father went home. You remember the long mental and bodily paralysis which makes the next year a blank to me. Ah, Lucy, they all thought this was because I had lost my father—I had lost another dearer than he!

Well, dear heart! I owe it to your tender, constant watchfulness, added to that of your father's and mother's, that I lived to write this letter. My life came out of its great sorrow; but it was another life then—it could never take up the song of its youth again. You remember when our old nurse, Hannah, came to see me at your house, some two years after papa had left me; I then discovered all I have ever known respecting Edward's conduct to me. It was enough to exonerate him entirely from blame—to exalt his character to its old place in my estimation.

Perhaps he was rash; but he was neither mean nor unjust, he was true to himself. It is barely possible that I should, at that time, have taken some means to reveal the truth to him if I had not learned that, a little while before, a new name had been granted to Edward and Sybil—the name of father and mother. I could not call down sorrow and shame on the fair young head of their child. They shall

“Grow together like the tares and wheat,
Till God's great fire!”

I know that Edward, sooner or later, must penetrate some of Sybil's disguises; and I know that the hour he ceases to respect that hour he will cease to love her. But he will have peace in his household; for his own manliness, his own true dignity of character will compel this. Sybil will always fear her husband, and she loves and respects him. I think her conscience must sometimes smite her for the great price she paid to secure Edward; but of this I, of course, know nothing.

Newton Gray is married. I have seen him but twice since *that* visit. And once you remember we came upon each other suddenly at the Fair. I was convinced, then, he knew something of his sister's deed by the grieved, shocked expression of his eyes when they rested on me.

Sybil, of course, had to invent some reason to satisfy her husband for the engagement being broken, which he supposed existed be-

tween Newton and myself; and it probably became necessary for her to partially acquaint her brother with the true circumstances of the case. I can well divine Newton's astonishment and horror on learning his sister's sin. Yet he would not be apt to disclose it to her husband. I hardly know whether he would be strong enough to do this, were he convinced it was simple justice he owed to me; and he would probably reason himself into the belief that it was now too late for the wronged to be righted.

So, Lucy, sweet Cousin Lucy, for the first and the last time I have unlocked the “secret chamber” of my heart, and you have passed in, and coming out, your face filled with the solemn awe of one who has read “the handwriting on the wall” of another's soul. You know now what has made me an “old maid.” The “sweet song of my youth” can never be struck up again in my heart, and its fairest, stateliest, holiest chamber is closed forever. But is all the joy, and fragrance, and glory of life closed to me, because this one love is denied me? God forbid! Simply because my fate is not united to that of some man as weak, it may be, as full of human frailty, and passion, and prejudice, and narrow vision as myself, shall I conclude my life is a failure, without work or message? Never, while the sweet days fall into solemn nights, with all their mysteries of glory and beauty. Never, while the goodly seasons rise out of the year, and walk before me, their lips full of God's messages, their hands of His gifts. Never, while there are books to nourish my soul, and poetry, and music, and painting to gladden and exalt it. Never, while there are human hearts to be strengthened, and healed, and saved.

I am an “old maid,” cousin; the dignity of wifehood, the joy of motherhood will never be mine; but may I not have tender and holy friendships? may not my days be springs of joy, and gratitude, and peace? may I not, too, have “the simple, loving heart which is content to go wondering and awe-struck all its days, and find in that mood peace, and strength, and wisdom?” You know, too, sweet heart, that I could never love a man I could not respect. Many women, I know, do this. Thank God, I am not one of them! From the hour I ceased to reverence my husband, I must cease to love him; and because of this I am what you call exacting, fastidious. My judgment must always indorse my affections, or these are only torments till I tear my soul away from them. So, Lucy, I am happy—happy in the knowledge I am an “old maid,” in the belief

that I shall die one. Very few wives do I know this hour with whom I would exchange positions. Is not matrimony, to most of them, a mistake and a disappointment?

Be sure that I love Edward Reigh still, but not with vain dreams, and regrets, and pining—*with a love such as the living give to those "whom God hath taken."* And then, if our Father wills it, we shall be together through all eternity! Shall I not be content to be separate in time? However, herein do not misapprehend me—I have no theory of unions in heaven. I have only faith sure and steadfast in my God, and this is my lamp, my anchor. I know that He who created my soul, with all its needs and longings, will satisfy them in His own time and His own way, plentifully, abundantly; but it is not for me to forestall either. My duty here is to serve Him, to trust Him, and the future I leave in His hands, joyfully, confidently. "The Judge of the earth will do right." The short day is fading into night. The doctor has forbidden my writing by lamp-light, and I must not longer strain my eyes over my paper.

Cousin Lucy, I have locked the door, and laid away the key of the chamber where we have walked together; and when we meet we will neither of us speak of what I have written. Cousin Lucy, the Lord give thee peace and quiet, the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon thee, prayeth, of her love,

Your cousin, ANNIE HASTINGS.

HIDDEN BEAUTY.

BY ALICE B. HAVEN.

"I AM delighted, Josephine!"

"The same dear old bear of a brother! Please set me down—oh, please, Joe; there will be nothing left of me."

"Well, there, then! I was so sorry I could not meet you at the steamer, but I sent young Allen—he is my confidential clerk, as I told you in my note. I had no idea you would get in so soon, and the board meeting was imperative."

"Yes, if your fervency had been expended in a trip to the wharf to-day, you would not have destroyed my collar"—the lady settled it with both her white hands, while a fretted, irritated look came into her face—"and I should not have been stripped of my baggage by that miserable custom-house officer. I de-

clare, they talk about foreign *espionage*; I could have gone through every custom-house in Europe with less insolence."

"It was provoking. Allen came steaming to the office full of it. But you must have your dinner. We can talk at the table, and you must be famished," said Mr. Horton, when his sister had given an animated description of her perils.

"Poking over every bit of lace, pulling out my three new bonnets, and all those lovely headdresses of Bonne Cherie, that came home the day I left, and then declaring that I must be a Bowery milliner in disguise, and marching off with every particle of finery! The Browns were gone, or they would have interfered, but there your young Allen stood, per-

fectly helpless. I declare I could have boxed his ears for his stupidity. It was all I could do to meet you amiably, I assure you."

"Oh, we will have that all right to-morrow. The things won't be injured. I will speak to the collector myself; I know him personally. Imagine you have just arrived from Philadelphia, and the expressman has forgotten to deliver your baggage," Mr. Horton offered his arm to his sister, like a well-bred gentleman, as he was. "We shall find the children in the dining-room. You have not seen them yet? No, they walk until four."

The children were there as foretold, five of them—Willie, a lad at the grammar school, and four younger ones, under the charge of a governess. There was nothing in the least noticeable or romantic in Miss Ashley, the children's teacher. She was tall, twenty-five or thereabouts, perfectly ladylike, and even commanding in manner, but very quiet and very plainly dressed.

"Mrs. Stuart, my sister, Miss Ashley."

Mrs. Stuart gave one glance, and a polite, but distant bow. The mousseline de laine dress and Marseilles collar, the lack of youth and beauty were sufficient to satisfy her as to any designs on her widower brother's fortune, and for the rest she had no interest whatever in one who was neither fashionable nor elegant; besides, the children were to be kissed and complimented.

"How fearfully they have all grown! I must have been gone a lifetime, instead of two years. I've brought them all toys, and here they are men and women. Why, Will, you're as tall as your father. Don't you dare to call me aunt; say cousin, before people! Where's my namesake? Joe, why I left you in long clothes! I've brought you a doll child, but you will be wanting a French hat. And this is Lucy; she's like her mother—how much she has grown like her! And Maria and Frank! What a houseful! Well, you have your share and mine too, but I'm satisfied."

"You will take the head of the table, Josephine; it will seem like old times." And Mr. Horton placed his sister before the tureen. "I don't know as you will be able to survive our soups and roasts after your *potage* and *rotiz*. But how have you left Charles, and when does he come? I had no idea you were alone, until I received your letter by the Vanderbilt."

"Nor I, until it was written; but I was all packed and our passages taken before the detention happened, and packing I detest! So, as our party was made up, I came along. I

believe I was homesick; yes, I think I was, to see you. If you could have seen the trouble I took with that packing! and there is everything—oh, in such a state! I declare it takes away my appetite."

"As fond of dress as ever. Well, you have had a fair chance to indulge that appetite, at all events."

"One would not suppose so from this shabby *ottoman velours*; but it is so chilly to-day, and this was the only thing, positively, that I could find. I am ashamed, Miss Ashley, to make your acquaintance in such a plight"—for Mrs. Stuart was kind-hearted, though volatile, and she addressed the plain, silent figure by way of putting her at ease.

Miss Ashley looked up at the stylish lady before her. "It does not look at all shabby," she said, with simple self-possession, neither abashed nor flattered by the lady's arrival.

"I don't suppose she'd know, if it belonged to the last empire," thought Mrs. Stuart, but she said: "Oh, I assure you, it has been dragged about the deck till it is perfectly seagreen around the hem, instead of blue."

"By the way, how many pieces did you have? They detained three, you say."

"Only nine."

"Only nine! Bless my heart! I don't wonder they confiscated three of them. What in the world did you manage to fill the other six with, if you have 'nothing to wear' in the whole of them?"

"Oh, things—things I've picked up travelling; all manner of souvenirs, from Venice, and Florence, and the Alps, you know—I wonder they passed over them—and some clothes, of course—*lingerie*, to speak politely—and last winter's dresses; but all my new things, that came home, the week I left, from Gagelin's, and Alexandrine's, and Bonne Cherie's, those are marched off with, and I can't show myself to a soul till I get them."

"Not even to Harriet Douglass?"

"Oh, the dear old creature! Is she in town?"

"Yes, and coming to see you to-morrow. They have a house in Eighteenth Street—a lovely little house; don't you think so, Miss Ashley?"

"It is very pretty."

"Then you know Mrs. Douglass?" And Mrs. Stuart turned to the governess, for the first time really looking into her face—the large features, gray eyes, and brown hair with a tinge of auburn. "Decidedly plain! How can ugly people endure themselves?" And Mrs. Stuart thought complacently of her own elegant figure, and white

throat, and beautiful eyes, and lovely, *unpaid-* for complexion. "She knows Mrs. Douglass. Probably, Harriet recommended her to brother; perhaps she has been in her family." And this was Mrs. Stuart's first impression of Miss Ashley.

Mrs. Douglass came, looking much older than her friend, more staid and matronly, but then she was at least six months behind the fashions, and, like Mr. Horton, had five children. She did not indulge in raptures, but her delight at the meeting shone out of her honest-looking eyes, and the ladies sat down and talked as fast as any school-girls; there was so much to be heard of mutual friends, and then there was all that story of the baggage to be rehearsed.

"I managed to find some decent things to-day, to be sure"—and Mrs. Stuart adjusted the point-lace sleeves that fell over her beautiful arm—"but only one solitary bonnet, and that black and canary; it does not suit a single dress I have, so I shall be a prisoner till those boxes make their appearance."

"You will be at church to-morrow?"

"To church! No, that is the last place I should desire to go to in this plight."

"It used to be the first, in old times, when people went to give thanks for a safe return."

"Pious as ever, so you are," said Mrs. Stuart, with upraised hands. "Recollect, we've been living without any Sunday, as well as without a church, for the last two years. I worship the beautiful, you see! Now, don't look so distressed. That's why I go to church at all. I think the service perfect poetry, and, if there is good music, so much the better. I like dark wood, and carved screens, and stained glass, and, if I could have my own way, I would have flowers in the chancel every Sunday, as well as at Easter. O yes, I should; and I'm not one of those people they call such dreadful names in England, either. My dear, the fun they were having at St. George's in the Fields, when Charles was over last! It was quite the rage to go and see the mob!"

"My dear Josephine, you are as—I was going to say as frivolous as ever—but no, I know you are not frivolous."

"Not at all, I assure you; I am just as earnest in my way as you are in yours. I like to surround myself with all that is beautiful because it is elevating; I like beauty in every form; I worship it; it hurts me to come in contact with anything coarse or unrefined. I dress elegantly as a matter of principle; delicate cambric, and fine gloves and shoes, and

rich materials keep me tranquil and happy. I do not injure any one by it; I can afford it."

"But there are so many destitute of even a covering here in New York, I cannot indulge myself if I would—I should not dare to."

"That's where you good people make the mistake, Charles contends. He says every franc we spend goes to the masses in some shape, that it is the duty of rich people to dress well to keep the poor employed. It's almsgiving that makes the shoals of beggars abroad. Poh! I wish you could see them! filthy, disgusting things, crowding around you everywhere."

"That's true in one sense." And Mrs. Douglass smoothed the deep fringe of her mantle thoughtfully, as ladies will to help themselves out in an argument, then more energetically: "But Horace contends, and he knows, that a just proportion does not go to the work-people, or how would their employers get rich so suddenly, while they are dying, supported by charity, and buried by it, too?"

"Oh, you would delight in the Princess Marie. She had half the Hotel Lenore when we came away, and she goes poking about into hospitals and places that Parisians never heard of! It was the wonder of all the court. But then she is ugly, poor thing, if she is a princess and duchess. So ugly! Do you go marching about tenement houses and ragged schools as much as you used to? I never could do it; I should suffer so, coming in contact with such places and people. The worst of poverty is its ugliness, I think."

"Dear Josephine," and Mrs. Douglass sighed a little low sigh that breathed the hopelessness she felt of bringing her friend to what she considered the light, "I can't decide for you of course. I don't think any one ever can dictate to another, for they never know all that hedges them in."

"You're more charitable than you used to be, at all events."

"I know, you mean that Chantilly mantle. Well, I did feel then that we ought never to indulge ourselves while others were in need. I can't do it yet; but I dare say what I consider necessary, some other people would call superfluous, even in our plain style of living. I believe Anne Ashley is the only consistent person I know of. I envy her sometimes the integrity of her way."

"Envy my brother's governess! Why she's the plainest person I've seen in years—that one *mousseline de laine* dress, she's had it on ever since I arrived."

"Thirty-six hours!"

"Yes; but I've changed mine three times—it distresses me; it's like a Lent diet."

"Do you know she supports her father who is an invalid, and is educating a brother's child, on her salary—six hundred a year?"

"No, I don't. I never did believe in miracles—nineteenth century miracles, I mean. Six hundred dollars is half of what I spend on my dress alone, outside of Mr. Stuart's little indulgences in the trinket and shawl line. It's impossible."

"But she does. One hundred is all she allows herself. I've known her these six years, knew her when she was in the Twelfth Street school; she was one of our first pupils in the School of Design. She has made her own way through a thousand difficulties."

"Shockingly plain, for all that. Safely so." And Mrs. Stuart thought what a famous opportunity a showy designing woman in her place would have.

"She always is ready with something to give, too; but her knitting does that. I wish I was as industrious."

"Positively, Harriet, I shall have to give you up; it would be a pity, too, as we are second cousins; but industry and self-denial are virtues I perfectly ignore. No, my creed is very simple—to wrong no one, never get in debt, and to dress so as to shock no one's sensibility, as Miss Ashley does mine, for instance."

"So we differ. But is she at home? The very sight of her face does me good. Why her life is a perfect sermon."

"Always did hate sermons!" persisted Mrs. Stuart, wickedly.

"Sometimes, when I feel as if I had been very industrious, and self-denying, and lowly, a little earnest talk with her, not about herself, understand, makes me feel way behind-hand. Cultivate her, Josephine."

"Not if she's going to make me self-condemned. I always keep on the best possible terms with myself; but I won't quarrel with her, unless it should be proved that she has no other dress. I shall then, decidedly."

Mrs. Douglass kissed her thoughtless friend affectionately. "One can't help loving you, Joe, for all."

"No boxes yet?" asked Mr. Horton, an hour later. "Well, I'm afraid we shall have to give them up for to-day, though they promised faithfully to deliver them."

The smiles with which his entrance had been greeted died out; and Miss Ashley, who had just come into the hall from the afternoon walk of her little pupils, looked at Mrs. Stuart in

amazement; her face was positively angry; not only vexation, but rage flashed from her eyes.

"All this detestable annoyance for that wretched engagement of yours," she said, almost fiercely. "It seems to me, if my sister had been gone two years, and was arriving alone, I could have managed to meet her. I know you could have done it just as well as not, if you had wished to. To-morrow's Sunday, and my mauve taffeta and bonnet—I meant them for my first appearance in church when I got them—locked up in the custom-house! It is perfectly outrageous!"

"Josephine!" said Mr. Horton, almost sternly; but he remembered his twin sister's passionate outbreaks when thwarted, of old, and passed on to the parlor without expostulation.

"I would have moved heaven and earth," she said, still angrily, to Miss Ashley, who was shut off from the stairs by the voluminous crinoline of the lady, and could not pass her without rudeness. "Brother might have known I had set my heart on having my bonnets before Sunday; but men are the most selfish, careless wretches in existence!"

Miss Ashley was not incapable of appreciating refinement and loveliness; on the contrary, her artist eyes drank in every form of beauty. Nor was she steeled against the desire for more than had fallen to her share. Since the day before, when she met Mrs. Stuart for the first time, the charming face had haunted her like a strain of music, and the temptation to wish that she dared surround herself with more of the appliances of dress, which added so much to the picture, had been battled with; but now, as she stood before the mirror to untie a knot in her bonnet strings, envy, if it had been heard, was no longer there, and in its place a painful, almost pitying thought went out to the one who had roused it.

The boxes came after all, half an hour after the outbreak, restoring smiles and good humor to the lady's face, bringing much penitence towards her brother, with a shade of mortification at the recollection of the look of astonishment she had met in Miss Ashley's face.

"I will show her the finery and make it all right. I don't suppose she ever beheld so much French millinery in her life."

Miss Ashley occupied an adjoining room. A tap, and "Won't you come in?" followed the thought.

She was quite right. Caroline Ashley had never beheld such a display as Mrs. Stuart made in selecting her toilet for her first appearance in public.

"There, there is the thing at last. Have they used those little macaroons in trimming here this winter? They are real lace, of course, with velvet centres. Here is the set I generally wear with it, point Alençon. Now, my bonnet. You dear old Alexandrine, here you are safe and sound, plumes and all. Isn't it perfect? rice straw and crape. So are her charges; she's ruinous! But I forgot; you belong to the Douglass school, and think it's wicked to throw money away in this fashion. That blue hat is perfection; but it won't do for church. I'm so thankful to think I sha'n't be kept at home to-morrow."

Considering the ample resources of the six trunks previously arrived, Miss Ashley could not understand this apparently heartfelt thanksgiving.

"You think it's wicked, I know," persisted Mrs. Stuart, pinching out bows, and smoothing ribbons. "It won't hurt my feelings to say so."

"I don't know, indeed; I dare say I should do just the same, if I had the same opportunity."

"That's candid, now; I like that."

Mrs. Stuart saw that it was not meant for servile assent; she had expected a sanotimonious rebuke.

"I mean I should have done once—I hope I should not now—and that it may not be wicked for you. If you can afford to give away proportionally, perhaps it is making employment for those that need it, and that is as much a duty as anything else."

"Give? Why, I'm always as poor as a mouse! I make it a point never to get in debt, but you've no idea of the amount of management it takes. That lace shawl cost me sleepless nights, I assure you. I had to give up the most exquisite bronze, after Cellini, I had set my heart on bringing to Mr. Horton. There are *bonbons*—see how fanciful! Are any of the children about?"

"To-morrow, please, Mrs. Stuart; it is too late to-night. That handkerchief is like frost-work—oh, how very lovely! If I dared, I should be very fond of lace; but I might as well set my heart on Mars or Venus, you know."

It was said so quietly, without envy or rebuke, that Mrs. Stuart began to feel more at home with her new acquaintance, and the process of arraying herself in a most becoming dress for the evening completely restored her good humor.

"If I had gone to church in that canary-colored hat and a green dress, I should have

been miserable and made myself wicked. I can't help it; an ill-fitting glove is misery itself," she said, as they separated for the night.

Mrs. Stuart was not visible, after all, in time for morning service—late hours were among her importations, also—but there was nothing to ruffle the lady's spirit in the faultless toilet in which she rustled up the aisles that afternoon, just as the bell ceased to toll. Even in fashionable "Calvary"—that the two words should ever be coupled, alas!—it created a sensation, among old friends and strangers alike. Mrs. Stuart was quite satisfied, and bent her stately head till her face was shaded by the drooping marabout plumes on her bonnet, with thoughts very far astray from her lowly posture. It was pleasant to be surrounded by home faces, more especially as they were admiring ones; pleasant to sit in the well-cushioned pew, with the dim, softened light at once so devotional and so becoming; pleasant to listen to the voices of men and women singers, and the blare of the full-voiced organ, or the rhymed music of the service, like a more solemn strain of melody. There was nothing to jar upon "the love of the beautiful" which Mrs. Stuart professedly worshipped, save the dress of some one immediately before her, in severe contrast to the rich toilets all around. It was Miss Ashley, who had walked to church with the children, and, with them, occupied the pew. Bonnet, mantle, and collar—how they stared Mrs. Stuart in the face, turn as she would. They made her feel unpleasantly, as a jarring note vexes the soul of the musician; and she pitied the wearer, as we dole out passing sympathy to one who bears the cross of physical deformity.

"It's very good in her to give away so much," thought Mrs. Stuart, while the second lesson fell, with dull, unheeded monotony, on her ears, "but how can she bear to dress so, when she is thrown into contact with people who do so differently? That is Ellen Billings in that next pew, and she has an India shawl on! How many I have seen this afternoon! Mine will not be half as distinguished as I expected; and side by side that rough straw hat and Scotch embroidery of Miss Ashley's. It must be so mortifying to see every one dressed so elegantly! I would stay at home, I declare, if I were obliged to be so pinching. I should not hear a word of the service, I should be so uncomfortable." And, suddenly recollecting that she was not hearing much now, Mrs. Stuart recalled her wandering attention with a mighty effort.

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel: But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price."

The words fell slowly and deeply into her heart. She had heard them before, perhaps had read them for herself, but we all know how a thought long familiar will suddenly flash in upon us with new meaning; and thus it was with those two verses of the lesson. She did not hear any more of it—she did not listen to the sermon, for those words had opened a flood of new perceptions in her thoughtless mind, pointed by the incidents of the day before and the humor of the moment. "In the sight of God!" It had never occurred to her that there was a higher favor or commendation to gain than the applause and admiration of the most fashionable clique in the community in which she lived; but suddenly the reality of what she had listened to all her life oppressed her. Was it really true that the body was nothing in comparison with the soul? and that those who neglected the last were unlovely in the sight of God and angels? She loved beauty so in its every shape, and heaven was all beauty. The streets of gold, and gates of pearl, and walls of precious stones, that fascinated her as a child, were only symbols of more dazzling loveliness and perfection than we can here conceive of; and the melody of Heaven, the glittering of those white robes, were for the beautiful in heart! It shocked her to think that, though she might be matchless without, there were eyes that saw her soul, defiled, and darkened, and warped by selfishness and pride. It was as if one had lived a lifetime without a mirror, perfectly self-complacent and self-delighted with an imaginary beauty, but had suddenly confronted one, to find deformity and foulness instead. An humbleness like that of a little child came over her, and she would have asked to be made beautiful in God's sight, but she did not know how to pray. So Harriet Douglass, with her old-fashioned dress and wan features, had this loveliness, and the coarse bonnet and plain dress of the teacher were only badges and tokens of it! But how could it be won?

Mrs. Stuart came out of the church with a quiet thoughtfulness in her face that even her brother noticed. She had forgotten the triumph she went there to seek, and answered the congratulations of such friends as she met, never

thinking whether they would consider her grown old, or if they noticed her tasteful toilet. The one thought still absorbed her—that those she had pitied were, after all, more beautiful; that the costly bracelet clasping her wrist, the dazzling diamonds shut up in their morocco case at home, which had been so many years the object of her ambition, were as dust and pebbles in the sight of the Creator of all beauty; while Miss Ashley's self-denial, humility, and unselfishness were "of great price."

"Won't you sit with us a little while?" she said, almost with earnestness, to the person she had met with such careless indifference, a day or two before, as they rose from the tea-table.

"The children must have their Bible lesson. I will come back again, perhaps."

The brother and sister were left alone. Mr. Horton sank into a reverie, and Mrs. Stuart turned over some books on the centre-table. Contrary to the usual state of things, she found no showy annuals. The costly bindings inclosed rare editions of standard authors, old and new, among them an illuminated copy of a quaint book of devotion. The gay borders attracted her, and presently she began to decipher the odd lettering.

"Nature loveth leisure and bodily rest:

"But Grace cannot be idle, and cheerfully embraceth labor.

"Nature seeketh to have those things that be curious and beautiful, and abhorreth that which is mean and coarse:

"But Grace delighteth in what is plain and humble, despiseth not rough things, nor refuseth to wear that which is old and patched.

"Nature respecteth temporal things, rejoiceth at earthly gain, sorroweth for loss, is irritated by every little injurious word:

"But Grace is not troubled with losses, nor soured with hard words, because she hath placed her treasure and joy in Heaven, where nothing perisheth.

"Nature rejoiceth to have many friends and kinsfolk; she glorieth of noble place and noble birth, smiles on the powerful, favors upon the rich, applauds those who are like herself:

"But Grace is not puffed up by multitude of friends, nor thinks much of high birth, unless it be joined with more exalted virtue; she favoreth the poor rather than the rich, hath more compassion of the innocent than of the powerful, rejoiceth with the true man, not with the deceitful."

As she looked up, Mr. Horton was bending over her. "Those illuminations are very fine, are they not?" he said. "I could not accuse

such a butterfly of reading that page, but you have had it open long enough. I came to see what you were about."

"I have read it through. How curious it is!"

"Curious!"—and he passed his arm around her waist and drew her to her feet. "Come, let us walk up and down awhile, as we used to in old times. What is curious?"

"Why that it is displeasing to God to love beautiful things."

"Oh no, you are mistaken there, only to love them inordinately."

"But to be really humble, and not pet one's self and one's—vanity, how hard it must be!"

"Yes," said Mr. Horton, as they passed slowly the length of the large room, in the old girl and boy fashion of their youth; "nothing in all the life of Christ appeals to me like His humility; shown, I mean, by voluntary contact with the poor and unrefined; even His dress, the seamless robe; and to think that he had not even one of those poor fishing huts on the shore of Galilee to call his own. Do you know how very miserable they are? one room only, and built of mud and stones, not more than twelve feet high, with a roof of branches, and mud, and gravel, with not so much as a window. This house is like a king's palace in comparison." The mirror towards which they walked reflected the long vista of rich furniture and costly draperies. "Yet we are not contented in the midst of luxuries."

"He must—the Saviour," and Mrs. Stuart's voice took involuntarily a low, reverential tone—"He must have been gentle and refined."

"O yes, and the contact with poverty, and ignorance, and disease must have been just so much the more painful; yet the rude fisherman, Peter, he loved, you know, and Matthew, and Andrew, and all of them, such men as even I would shrink from familiarity with. It is overwhelming condescension, isn't it?"

Mr. Horton spoke to himself rather than his sister, as his heart burned with the thought; and he stopped suddenly, recollecting that she could not understand or sympathize in anything so foreign to her trifling nature; but, to his surprise, she put her hand on the book they had been looking at, and said: "I can understand this better now." She opened the book again at the commencement; perhaps here was the knowledge she desired, and her eyes fell upon the fly-leaf, on which was written—"Joseph Horton to Anne Ashley." "That is not quite like you." And she looked up with a puzzled, questioning glance.

"Why not?" asked Mr. Horton, quietly.

"Oh, the 'Anne.' It sounds familiar."

"Too much so to the woman who is to be my wife!"

"Brother Joe!"

"Don't look horrified; you do not know her yet."

"But she is here now, in your house, and I have been here two days, and not a word of it. It looks—well, it does look precisely as if you were both ashamed of it."

The day before, Mrs. Stuart would have cried out about "family," and "connections;" but now she thought only of the proprieties, and that it had been kept from her.

"It looks as if there had been no time to inform you of it before you came. If you notice the date of that, you will see it was just two weeks ago, and she did not leave, at my—command, almost—because I wished you to form an unprejudiced judgment. Even Mrs. Douglass does not know of it; but her home is Anne's home, and she goes there to-morrow to stay until she comes back to this as its mistress. I am ready for all your objections."

"She is so plain," rose to Mrs. Stuart's lips. But in whose eyes? "No family!" That was unspoken, also; she remembered in whose family they were all equal, nay, Miss Ashley ranked far before her.

"Here she comes now. Speak to her, Josephine," said Mr. Horton, hastily, fearful of the inevitable scene that he had dreaded more and more since his sister's arrival.

Mrs. Stuart rose and met her future sister at the door, with kindness, even warmth. She had cast out the ungenerous suspicion that her brother was accepted from interested motives.

"I have just heard this romantic history," she said, brightly, as Miss Ashley blushed and shrank back from her salutation. "I believe you will make Joe happy, and be good to the children. Perhaps you will take me in training, too. As you are lovers, I shall leave you to yourselves now, while I go and astonish Charles with the news. I must confess that yesterday I should not have taken it so quietly."

What had wrought the transformation neither Mr. Horton nor his wife knew for years after; but it was real and unaffected good-will, as Mrs. Stuart proved in selecting a part of the simple but tasteful wardrobe for the bride.

"I am so relieved at finding that she doesn't intend to persist in *mousselines de laine* and *Marseilles*," she said to Mrs. Douglass, in one of the numerous consultations growing out of the affair; "what was very well for Miss Ash

ley would be inexcusably mortifying in Mrs. Horton."

"That is precisely it," and Mrs. Douglass smiled, "the proper difference between an income of six hundred and six thousand. Anne has no fancy for singularity. We none of us believe that saintship consists in obvious mortifications and ostentatious humility. Anne will never annoy you by meanness."

But whether as Miss Ashley or Mrs. Horton, the spirit of loving self-restraint, for the sake of those commended to her by her Master, never forsook the noble-hearted girl, who had been rewarded for being faithful in a few things, by being made ruler over many.

IN TIME OF WAR.

BY ANNIL FRACET.

(See plate.)

"SHALL you be at the cadets' ball, this evening?" said Cora Hart to her Cousin Nellie, as they sat together in the latter's room at Cozins' West Point Hotel.

"O yes, balls all winter, balls all summer! I wish mother would go into the backwoods, for a few months, to rusticate." And Nellie Hart threw herself on a sofa, as if entirely weary of such dissipation.

"Now, Nell, how ungrateful! Were you not de belle, last winter?"

"Nonsense, Cora!"

"Well, look your prettiest this evening; these 'military' men, as our Irish girl calls them, are quite fastidious. Wear white and curls."

"Can't. My hair positively refuses to curl in warm weather."

"Mine don't; I can't get the curls out of it." And Cora shook down a mass of black ringlets over a saucy, piquant face.

"Cora, who was the gentleman who stopped you in the hall this morning, after breakfast?"

"Lieutenant Wilde. You repeat his question. He stopped me to inquire who was the exquisitely beautiful blonde that arrived yesterday. Now, Nell, take care; the Lieutenant is at present devoted to me, so don't intrude."

"But, Cora, Henry?"

"Oh, Henry is at home. I must flirt with somebody. Because I am engaged, must I turn nun?"

"But Henry will be here to-morrow."

"I shall have dismissed the Lieutenant by that time."

"O Cora! Cora!"

"O Nell! Nell! Hark! the dinner-gong, and I am yet in my wrapper. By, by!" And the little brunette flitted from the room.

The large ball-room was brilliantly illuminated, and gay groups were clustered in various parts, chatting, flirting, some dancing. Two tall, handsome men, in lieutenant's uniform, stood near a window, conversing. They were half hidden by the falling curtains, and criticized freely the company already assembled.

"See, Clarence, there is your last flame, Miss Hart. How beautiful she is, to-night! Who but her would dare to wear scarlet tissue in summer. Does she not look like some tropical flower?"

"Look at her companion," said Clarence.

"That is her cousin, Miss Ellen Hart, and the dignified lady in black crape is her mother."

"Is she not lovely? Those soft braids of fair hair, with the tiny, starlike forget-me-nots twisted so gracefully round her head, and that pure white dress! She is positively angelic!"

"Shall I introduce you?"

"Do, my dear fellow."

Arm in arm, they sauntered across the room.

"See, Nell," said Cora, "here come Lieutenants Wilde and Harvey. You know Joe Harvey?"

"Yes."

"They are coming this way. Now, Nell, if you dare captivate my Lieutenant— Ah, good-evening, gentlemen. My cousin, Miss Hart."

The two lieutenants bowed low. Harvey

offered his arm to Cora, while Wilde stood near Nellie.

"Mother, let me introduce to you Lieutenant Wilde," said Nellie, as Cora waltzed off with Harvey.

"Wilde! Excuse me, but was your mother's maiden name Curtis?"

"Yes, madam, Laura Curtis."

"Then I may claim acquaintance with the son of an old schoolmate. Nellie, you have heard me speak of Laura Curtis?"

"Often, mother."

The conversation, turning first on friendly inquiries on the part of Mrs. Hart, grew lively, and, if Lieutenant Wilde had before admired Nellie for her lovely face, she now no less attracted him by her intelligence and graceful address.

Nellie Hart was the only child of a widowed mother, and heiress to a large property; and most jealously did her mother watch every friend she made, yet even her fastidious taste found no fault with this new acquaintance. Quiet, modest in his address, every word and gesture showed the *gentleman*; and Mrs. Hart smilingly nodded assent to Nellie's inquiring glance, as the Lieutenant asked her to dance.

Having arrived at West Point only the day before, Nellie had made no acquaintances at the hotel; and, although many gentlemen were introduced to the beautiful blonde, Lieutenant Wilde kept near her almost all the evening, and, like a wily diplomatist, spent the intervals in conversation with Mrs. Hart.

"Nellie, Nellie," cried Cora, "I did not expect this of you."

They were seated near the window of the same room in which they had spent the morning.

"Why, Cora, you were fairly besieged by the United States army. How could I imagine you wanted Lieutenant Wilde?"

"I didn't want him. Fudge! little Carson is fifty times as handsome."

"Oh, Cora, Mr. Wilde is very handsome."

"But such a bear!"

"A bear, Cora! His manners are perfect."

"And such a fool!"

"Cora, he is one of the most intelligent men I ever conversed with."

"Ahem! you'll do!" said Cora, laughing heartily.

"I—I—"

Nellie crimsoned, and then turned from her mischievous cousin, and began to take the flowers from her hair.

"Is that a hint that you are sleepy, and

would like to retire?" said Cora, after watching her operations for some minutes.

"No, we can chat in a wrapper, but I want to loosen my hair."

"It don't come off, does it, like Mrs. Potter's! She danced her false curls down on Captain Colton's shoulder, and they hung most picturesquely over his epaulets."

"There!" said Nell, shaking down her hair in a golden shower, almost reaching to her feet; "that is comfortable."

"You look like an insane angel. Oh, if Lieutenant—"

"Cora!" said Nell, imploringly.

"Henry is coming to-morrow, so you can have your Wilde admirer all to yourself. Mr. Wilde—the name would suit your present costume admirably. There! don't blush; I'll stop. Hark! three o'clock! I must run. Good-night!"

After Cora left her, Nellie went to the window, and stood there for a moment. It was oppressively warm, and, after extinguishing her light, she stood at the open window, looking out on the beautiful scenery. It was moonlight, and the rays shone full upon her; but, supposing all asleep at that hour, she did not draw the curtain. From a bench under a clump of trees, entirely concealed by the deep shadow, Lieutenant Wilde, smoking his cigar, studied this tableau. The white dress, flowing hair, and graceful figure, all bathed in the moonlight, were no mean study, even had the soldier been an artist. At last, the curtain fell over the window, shutting out the vision, and Clarence Wilde lazily arose and sauntered towards the hotel. As he passed Nellie's door, he murmured, "That girl is my wife, if I can win her."

The days glided into weeks, and Mrs. Hart still lingered at West Point. Cora was at Saratoga, yet Nellie expressed no desire to join her. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, two hearts were knitting together in the pleasant walks and rides taken at West Point. Long evenings, spent on the porch or in the dimly-lighted parlors, added their effect; and Mrs. Hart was gratified, but not surprised, when Laura Curtis's son sought her, to ask the hand of her daughter.

They were married! In Mrs. Hart's lovely house on the Hudson all three lived, for the widowed mother pleaded hard to keep her child near her.

"If you should be called away to serve your country," she said to Clarence, one evening, after he had been married some months, "let me be here with Nellie."

"But these are times of peace," said the young wife, clinging to her husband, and turning pale at the mention of a possibility which haunted her.

"Long may they continue so," said he, bending to kiss her, "for your sake, Nellie!"

Four years passed on quietly in that happy home, and the voice of another Clarence, a fair-haired boy, rang through the house and over the lawn and garden.

One afternoon, Nellie and her mother were seated in the parlor, conversing. Little Claire, tired out with a day's pleasures, was fast asleep in Nellie's arms.

"Mother," said Nellie, "do you notice how abstracted and troubled Clarence has grown lately, and so tender, so loving—"

"Is he not always that?"

"Yes, but so sadly loving now. He holds me, sometimes, pressed close to his heart, and looks in my eyes with such a heart-breaking tenderness! Oh, mother, I fear—I cannot tell what, but I fear some evil."

"Sitting here in the dark?" said the voice of Nellie's husband, now Captain Wilde.

"Yes, come in," said Mrs. Hart. "Here is Nellie complaining that her husband is too loving."

"Mother!" cried Nellie, then added: "Come, Clarence, take Claire and put him on the sofa; my arms ache."

As Captain Wilde bent over his wife, to comply with her request, she felt that his hand was cold as death, and his whole frame trembling. He placed the child on the sofa, and then sat down beside Nellie.

"My wife," he murmured, drawing the golden-crowned head close to him, "oh, how can I leave her?"

"Leave me, Clarence, leave me?" cried Nellie, almost fainting with apprehension. "When? Why?"

"To-night, darling, to-night! My company sails from New York, to-morrow morning, for Mexico."

"Oh, that fearful war! Must it be, then?" cried Mrs. Hart.

"Yes, war is now positively declared. I have been expecting this order for some time. Nellie! Nellie! she has fainted!"

Poor Nellie! this confirmation of her worst fears was too great a shock; but after the first insensibility was overcome, she strained every nerve to bear the parting bravely. Her husband was a soldier, and his country claimed him; and a brave, heroic spirit, never before

suspected in the lively, but gentle Nellie, now sustained her. Not till the last kiss was given, the last farewell spoken, did this firmness give way; but, as the carriage rolled away from the door, bearing with it the sunlight of her home, Nellie sank fainting upon the threshold. I have passed over the parting, nor can I speak of the agony that ensued. Such scenes, such emotions are sacred; let them be respected.

Time passed wearily in that lovely home. Every day, Claire added fresh agony to the young wife's sorrow by lisping inquiries for "Papa," and the bitter longing for news, the sickening dread of evil were seen in Nellie's languid step, low voice, and anxious face. Mrs. Hart watched her idol carefully, yet sympathized too deeply in the sorrow to chide her for betraying it.

It was a bright afternoon in July, and Nellie, taking Claire for a companion, strolled down to a grove near the house, to let the child sail a tiny boat on a mimic lake there. It was a spot endeared to her by many scenes with her husband. They had often passed whole evenings there, sitting or strolling in the moonlight, chatting or silent, as their mood varied, but, as Nellie now bitterly recalled, always loving, kind. After they left the house, Mrs. Hart drew forth from her pocket a letter, received that morning, which she had not dared to open in Nellie's presence. It was directed, in a strange hand, to her, and post-marked Point Isabel. If all was well, certainly Clarence would have written to his wife, and the mother carefully concealed the letter until she could open it alone. Alas! her fears were realized. There had been a great battle—Palo Alto—and Captain Wilde was dangerously wounded in the lungs. Mrs. Hart shuddered with dread as the task of imparting this information to Nellie rose before her. Slowly, she left the house, and walked down to the grove. Long before she was near enough to speak, she could see Nellie and Claire under the trees. Her step grew slower, as she came towards them, till, heart-sick with her task, she leaned against a tree, looking at her child, who, all unconscious of her great sorrow, was talking to Claire. The boy's face was raised to Nellie's, as, with a low, sweet voice, she told him of his absent father, painting to the eager, listening Claire the dangers of war and his father's bravery and gallantry.

"When will he come home, mamma?" asked Claire.

"I cannot tell, Claire."

"Show me my pretty papa."

Nellie drew from her bosom the miniature which Claire called his "pretty papa."

"I wish he'd come home!" said Claire again. "I'm afraid the nasty soldiers will kill my pretty papa."

Nellie raised her eyes in silent prayer, and then she saw her mother.

"A letter! Give it to me! Quick! quick!"

"Nellie dear, first let me tell you—"

"He is not dead!"

"No, my child, but—"

"The letter! let me see the letter!" she gasped, taking it. It was short.

MADAM: My friend and comrade, Captain Wilde, desired me to write to you. In yesterday's battle he fell, severely, we fear dangerously wounded, by a bayonet thrust, through the lungs. He is in the hospital, unable to write, but trusts to you to communicate the intelligence to Mrs. Wilde.

I remain, madam,

Most respectfully yours,

JOSEPH HARVEY.

MRS. C. J. HART.

PALO ALTO, *May 9th*, 1846.

Nellie read every word. She did not faint, though her face grew white as marble, and a cold chill gathered near her heart.

"I am going to my husband," she said, in a calm, clear voice, as she returned the letter.

"Going to Mexico. No, no! I cannot let you!" cried Mrs. Hart.

"I must go. Come." And she moved for the house. She took but a few steps, and then fell upon the grass. All the forced calmness gave way, and she sobbed so violently and long that Mrs. Hart was alarmed. Yet, this paroxysm over, she persisted in her first intention.

In vain her mother begged her to desist from her preparations for departure, she remained firm in her resolve; and, leaving Claire with her mother, she sailed from New York a few weeks after the news reached her of her husband's danger. There were other ladies, officer's wives, in the vessel; and, when Nellie's sad errand was known, much sympathy was shown, and many little attentions paid her. She looked so fair and so frail to start upon that long voyage to a country where war was raging, and the terror lest she should reach Mexico only to find herself a widow, kept her lovely face touchingly sad and pale. Mrs. Colton, the wife of the captain of the vessel, who had herself two sons in the war, was very kind to Nellie, and, when the vessel arrived at her destined port, she offered to accompany her on her search,

pleading a desire to see her own "boys" as an excuse to cover the kindest intentions towards the sad sufferer. Through the long voyage, Nellie had been calm and quiet; but now that certainty was so near, the trembling frame, flushed cheek, and nervous, hurried manner, all betrayed the torturing suspense.

The troops landed, and Nellie and Mrs. Colton, comfortably perched upon bags of provisions, in a baggage wagon, drove slowly after them towards the interior.

After all her travel, Nellie stood at last, with her kind friend, at the door of the large church where, making it a temporary hospital, the wounded from Palo Alto still lay. Months had passed! Was Clarence there? Nellie went in with such a faltering step and pallid face that Mrs. Colton, thinking she was fainting, made the inquiries herself.

Captain Wilde, discharged after several weeks' illness, had left the hospital, and joined his regiment.

"Where is he now?"

"I cannot tell. My post is here."

"But he is well?"

"O yes; the wound was not so dangerous as was supposed."

"We must find him."

"Stop, Mrs. Wilde!" said Mrs. Colton, "you can do nothing to-night; sit down. There! I knew she would faint!"

But Nellie did not faint! She saw that nothing further could be done then, and, after one glad, silent prayer of thanksgiving, she turned to Mrs. Colton.

"There are others here needing assistance as much as my poor husband did. Cannot we be of some use?"

"We are very short of nurses, that's a fact," said the man, who acted as porter; "but I guess you ain't got the stuff in you for a hospital nurse."

"Let me do something," said Nellie, imploringly. "I cannot sit here and *think*. To-morrow, I will find my husband."

But many to-morrows passed, and found them still in that old church; and many a hard soldier blessed the soft hand, sweet voice, and tender care that replaced the often careless treatment of the hired nurses.

At last, Nellie heard of Clarence. He was at Monterey, again wounded; and Nellie, finding travel difficult, and her position a painful one, took leave of Mrs. Colton, who was obliged to return to her husband, and joined a regiment as a sutler-woman, in place of one left ill at the hospital.

Marching over a new country, heart-sick and weary, Nellie still bore up bravely, in the hope of seeing her husband. One day, weary and disheartened, she was leaning against a tree, crying bitterly, when some one touched her on the shoulder.

"What's the trouble, my girl?"

She looked up.

"Captain Harvey!"

"Mrs. Wilde, Nellie Hart, how did you come here, and in this dress?"

"Oh, Captain Harvey, where is my husband?"

"At home, I hope."

"What do you mean? This is no time for jesting."

"Nor do I jest. Clarence lost an arm at Monterey, and sailed from here for New York nearly three weeks ago. Come! do not look so white. A lame husband at home is better than a dead one here."

"At home! Oh, what shall I do?"

"Why, you had better come with me. Mrs. Harvey is with me, and we will decide what is best for you."

Nellie followed him mechanically to the tent, where Mrs. Harvey conducted the camp house-keeping. There the overtasked frame gave way, and she sank down fainting. For many days she lay very ill, and then came back to consciousness to find herself in a private room in an hospital. It was no unkindness that left her thus lonely. Captain Harvey's duties called him forward, and his wife had no choice but to follow him. Returning health came slowly, and, finding there was no vessel bound for home for several weeks, Nellie quietly resumed her own hospital cares. Like some angel visitant, that fair face bent over the sufferers, often increased now by battles on all sides, many carried long miles to die on their arrival at a place of rest, many delirious with pain, many swearing and cursing till she turned faint with horror. Up and down the long aisles, from one bed to another she passed, keeping up her own strength with the comforting thought of her husband's safety at home.

"We shall be loth to lose you," said one of the physicians, taking her aside, one morning, "for you have the steadiest nerves I ever saw in such a fragile frame. Can you assist me now? and your reward shall be a piece of good news."

Accustomed to the sight of blood by frequent contact, Nellie's ready, skillful fingers were at his service for a long, tedious operation; and silent blessings were showered upon

her head by the sufferer, who, manfully crushing back every groan of pain, felt his heart swell almost to bursting, as her low voice whispered comfort in his ear, and her hand wiped away the drops of perspiration from his face.

"That is over," said the doctor, as she gently laid the soldier's head on the pillow. "Now for the news."

"Yes, tell me now."

"A homeward-bound vessel leaves Point Isabel next week, and you can join the disabled soldiers who go from here to-morrow. May God reward you for the good you have done here," the doctor added, solemnly, "and bring you safely to your husband."

In the parlor of Mrs. Hart's house on the Hudson, early in the year 1847, were collected a group of our old friends. First, seated on the sofa, was Captain Wilde, his one arm round Claire, who asked now as constantly for "mamma" as he had before done for "papa." Mrs. Hart sat opposite, sewing; and, on another sofa, sat Cora, now Mrs. Henry Russell, and her husband.

"One more day," said Cora. "Nellie will surely be here to-morrow."

"She will hardly come to-night. The vessel arrived to-day. Oh, if I could only meet her!" said the Captain, who, still ill from the effects of two wounds, had been with much difficulty dissuaded from going to New York to meet Nellie.

There was a light step in the hall and up the stairs, but nobody heard it. A moment later, Cora left the room to look at her little girl, who slept in a room overhead. As she opened the door, one cry escaped her, but she suppressed it and went in.

"Oh," cried Captain Wilde, again, "I feel as if I could not wait another night before seeing Nellie."

"Ladies and gentlemen," cried Cora, at the door, "allow me to introduce— O pshaw, she's gone!"

A figure glided by her towards the Captain, and Nellie was in her husband's arms.

JACASSA'S JOURNAL.

BY MARY W. JANVRIN, AUTHOR OF "PEACH," "THE COUNTRY COUSIN," "MISS HARRINA'S DREAM," ETC. ETC.

MAY 30th.

My name is Jacassa Selina Bowen; I am twenty-four, and unmarried; I am "literary"—that is, I have earned something of a reputation by writing for the magazines and popular light literature of the day. I was worn, physically, by my long winter's toil in the busy city, and I have come down to board and spend a quiet summer in this pleasant sea-side, yet country farming-town of Ryefield. I shall not write much here, I opine; rather will I resign myself to the influences of nature which woo me to a luxurious, *dolce far niente* sort of laziness, which I need as a reaction to the busy, brain-tensioned past. I feel, already, years younger than I did when I came here, and I have been in Ryefield but three weeks yesterday.

There is a positive refreshment in the very air around the farm-house, to say nothing of the quiet comfort of its scrupulously neat interior. The house is old and rambling, but well-kept, and, unlike country houses in general, has a long porch in front, covered with a luxuriant trained honeysuckle; and in the front yard, good Mrs. Hull tells me, by and by will bloom "daffies," and ladies' delight, and "pinies," and poppies, and hollyhocks. The entry is spacious, and the staircase is wide and turns with abrupt angles at every broad stair. On one side, below, is the closed parlor, with shuttered windows, a carpet with "set" figures, a long, wide old-fashioned sofa, a table placed exactly under the gilt-framed looking-glass between the two front windows, chairs ranged around rather primly, and a mourning-piece and profile hanging over the mantel. But I do not sit often in this room, though motherly Mrs. Hull begs me to go where I like and "feel at home," for the closed windows give it a sort of close, musty smell. Instead, I often bring down my sewing, of an afternoon, into the large, sunny, pleasant sitting-room, with its cheerful chintz lounge and comfortable rocking-chairs, its bright homespun carpet, green asparagus-plumes and hemlock-boughs in the fireplace, the tall eight-day clock in the corner, and the polished hundred-legged table, whereon I have placed a few of my books in addition to the family Bible, "Baxter's Call," and the "New Hampshire Gazetteer," which lay there,

and the high mantel-shelf, ornamented with a pair of bright brass candlesticks, and a trio of gayly painted plaster images ranged after a fashion whereof I read once in an old story—"a parrot, a puppet, a shepherdess"—"a parrot, a puppet, a shepherdess."

The long kitchen, extending the whole length of the rear of the house, save the buttery at one end, is a marvel of neatness, from the carefully scoured and sanded threshold of the back door to the red tiled hearth whereon Mrs. Hull stands on baking-days, before the open-mouthed, glowing brick oven, to superintend the incomings and outgoings of the great loaves of cake, the batches of pies, and countless drop-cakes which find their way to her bountifully spread table, for my hostess serves me no meagre fare—stale bread, superannuated cake, the "fossil remains" of last week's steak converted into minced pies, nor the beverage yeleft coffee faintly colored with feeble chalk-and-water cream, such as one must be content with at city boarding-houses.

Then, my own room is the spare chamber over the closed parlor, and the embodiment of my idea of comfort. To be sure, the smothering bed of live geese-feathers, which I tumbled to the floor, and good Mrs. Hull bore away, after my first night here at the farm, savored of rather too warm a welcome; but the snow-white valance and fresh pillow-slips, the long dimity curtains swaying to and fro in the breeze that comes in through the raised window from the blooming apple-orchard below, the little round table upon which I have laid out my portfolio, writing-desk, and books, and where I am writing now; the great china pitcher crowded with pink and white apple-blossoms, whose fragrance is more delicate than Lubin's vaunted *extraits*—do not all these bring a vision of rest and comfort to the eyes that have long been used to the crowded city street and high brick-and-mortar walls?

And then, too, away beyond the acres of white bloom in the apple-orchards, beyond the green meadows and the farthest dark belt of forest, I catch a glimpse of the blue sea—the fresh, the beautiful sea, that always brings me an inspiration! The sea and the forest! Byron never wrote two truer lines than these:—

"There is a pleasure in the pathless wood,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore!"

I have spent afternoons, in the long, bright May-time, among the woodland paths over yonder, gathering the fragrant pink and white trailing arbutus, the frail wind-flower, the pale anemone, and dark, glossy wintergreen; and often, when Farmer Hull harnesses his black horse for a ride to the vicinity of the beach, I beg for a ride; and while he talks and bargains with the fishermen, I walk along the edge of the curling breakers, breathing the strong, damp sea air, watching the sea-birds dip their wings in the creamy foam, then stretch away over the waves, or gather white cockle-shells or brown "sailors' rattles" from the bare sand.

"I wish I could live on the beach," I said, the other night, to good Mrs. Hull, as I came home from one of these rides with her husband, standing and holding my hat by the strings, at the dairy door, where she was "setting" the evening's milk. "Yes, I do; I wish I owned a house right there on Boar's Head, where, all night long, stormy nights, I could hear the solemn music of the waves beating against the foot of the cliff."

"I rather guess you'd begin to feel kinder solemn yourself, a-layin' awake two or three sich nights, and be a-beatin' round for some place where you could git a good, comfortable night's sleep, Miss Jacassy," good-humoredly said Mr. Hull, who had overheard my remark, coming into the kitchen for supper.

"Oh, I'm sure, Mr. Hull, that the ocean would never weary me," I replied, deprecatingly; "I could listen to its voice forever. You don't know—" But I checked myself there, for I couldn't tell him *why* I dwelt so constantly on thoughts of the sea. "I shall be sorry when the time comes for me to go back to the crowded city again, never to look upon the sea, save the harbor crowded with ships, never to feel the lonely calm and rest of the quiet sandy beaches."

"Come, come, Miss Jacassy, you forget mother's nice supper's waitin', and your ride ought to a' gin you a right sharp appetite. As for your goin' back to that stived-up city ag'in, I've my notions ag'in that, too, and rather guess mother and I'll have to adopt you. Hey, mother, what do you think on't?" as Mrs. Hull made her appearance from the dairy. "Keep you as well as not, out here on the farm—no gals nor nothin' of our own, and 'Lisha, he's off a-lawyerin' in Boston. I declare you *have* picked up right smart and rosy in jest these three weeks you've been here, and I don't know 'bout lettin' you

go back to git pale and pindlin' ag'in." And the farmer kindly stroked my head as I sat down to table.

I could not eat much of the savory edibles the good man and his wife pressed upon me, for the emotions that swelled in my throat. I had met so little kindness these latter years of my life—there were so few who loved me—that the honest affection of these simple people made my heart very tender.

When I left the kitchen, at the close of the meal, I overheard Mrs. Hull remark to her husband: "Somehow, her talk about the beach puts me in mind of 'Lisha; he alters spends half his time down to the shore, when he comes home, you know, Amos. Now, I dare say she'll go and write a piece of po'try or something about it, and it'll read beautiful when it's printed."

Later, that evening, when I had come down to sit with Mrs. Hull, she brought from the parlor a daguerreotype-case and placed it in my hand. I opened it. I do not know that there was anything peculiar in the face that met me save that it was frank and manly in expression; but the eyes had a depth and a certain clairvoyance, if I may so speak, that seemed to read my own thoughts in mine.

"It is 'Lisha's picture," said Mrs. Hull, with a pleased, motherly expression in her countenance. "He brought it for a present, last summer, when he came home. And it looks jest like him—jest so pleasant and good! He ain't handsome; 'Lisha never was; but he's a good boy, Miss Jacassy! I shall allers call him boy. I b'lieve," she added, smiling, "though he's—lemme see, 'Lisha *must* be twenty-seven, this spring. They say he's gettin' to be a great lawyer, off there in the city. Maybe you've heard of him; his pardner is Cyrus Harlow; they're 'Harlow & Meredith.'"

"I have heard of the firm," I answered. "You must be very happy in your son, Mrs. Hull," I said, handing back the miniature.

"Son! La, bless you, Miss Jacassy, haven't I told you? Why, he's Amos's nephew, his youngest sister's child. But then we took him when he was only seven—all alone in the world, an orphan—and he seems jest like our own. Amos wanted to make a farmer of him; but, somehow, the boy took to his books. And so I told Amos 'twant no use to go ag'in natur', and, if we had plenty of this world's goods, and the farm brought in more'n we ever should know what to do with, we'd better give 'Lisha a college eddication, and we did.'"

"But had you never any children of your own, my dear Mrs. Hull?" I asked.

She did not answer; but the hand that held the miniature trembled and snapped the spring suddenly. She left the room, and presently returned from the parlor with one of the profiles, cut in paper, which I had noticed in its little gilt frame over the mantel; and, when I turned to look upon it by the flickering lamp-light, I saw a tear upon the glass. The outline was that of a youthful face, plump and rounded.

"This is all I have left of poor Mary, except some of her hair in my bureau-drawer up stairs," she said, in a husky voice. "It was taken years ago, before miniatures were invented. She died when she was only seventeen; it was over twenty years ago. Oh, Miss Jacassy, you don't know how that blow took hold of our hearts, Amos's and mine! He can't speak about her to this day without cryin', though nobody'd call Amos Hull a soft-hearted man. It was our trouble that first opened our hearts to 'Lisha, I suppose. Deary me! I hope, if you ever marry and have children of your own, you'll never have them taken from you! Nobody knows, except them that's lost 'em, the loneliness of a sorrow-stricken mother's heart. I like to have young people in the house," she added, returning from the parlor, whither she went to replace the profile on the wall—that simple outline of features which, though mingled these twenty years with the grave-mould, still conjured to the mother's gaze a vision of her dead and gone seventeen-year-old Mary. "I like to have you here, for it seems like having Mary with us again. Somehow, you put me in mind of her every day; your laugh sounds jest like hers; though my poor Mary wasn't accomplished, and didn't have such great talents as you have, and couldn't have made a verse of po'try to save her life. But she was a good girl, and would a' been a sight of comfort to Amos and I in our old age, if she'd a lived." For the good woman didn't seem to think that her Mary might have left her for another home; to her, she was still the seventeen-year-old girl whose pleasant laugh and smile cheered the farm-house. "A sight of comfort! but God took her, and he knows what's for the best! 'Lisha, now, he'd like your po'try and writings, I dare say," she continued, in a more cheerful vein, "for he's a-lers readin' some book or other when he's at home. I do hope he'll be at home this summer, if he don't stay only long enough to go down to the beach; he seems kind of bewitched with the sea, and, if he comes while you're

here, he'll carry you there as often as you want to go."

"Yes, indeed! and then you can pitch a tent there, and live till you're tired," said farmer Hull, good-humoredly, coming in then from his outdoor duties. "But look here, mother, I got some nice fresh fish down to the shore, this afternoon, and we'll have 'em fried for breakfast. Miss Jacassy'd better begin to larn to like fish, if she's goin' down to live by the sea."

I have written all this here because it pleases me, the honest, well-meaning kindness of these good people; and it pleases me, the life of quiet content I am leading here in this season of rest. I shall try to put off all thoughts of the future and live in the present; to enjoy all and everything that comes to me, the fresh air, the birds and flowers, the woods, and the sea. I will lay aside my pen, now; but I may write more some other day.

JUNE 15th.

I like to talk about myself in my journal, as I talk about other people on paper; so I will sit down, this soft, rainy, June day, while there is a cool, pattering sound among the leaves of the great elm at my window, and write out—as I do for my heroines—a history of my life.

I have hitherto written nothing here of my antecedents, save that I am twenty-four, and unmarried, I am "literary," and my name is Jacassa Selina Bowen.

"'Jacassy?' Where upon earth did I get that name?" honestly queried farmer Hull, the other day; and I will answer here, and more at length, too, than I did him then.

Jacassa was for my mother, who was a Southron by birth; though I have no memory of her save of a beautiful, pale face lit by dark eyes of unnatural brilliancy, as she leaned against the back of her sick-chair, while colored nurses watched her, and my father leaned over her tenderly. This was in the early morning twilight of my childhood. She died soon after. I remember I wept passionately when they told me; and my father brought me back to his native New England home, to the care of his maiden aunt, Miss Selina Bowen, who, with nobody to love or cheer her loneliness in her old-fashioned mansion, received me into her heart and home, adding her maiden name to my patronymic, with the proviso, I suppose, that I was to inherit all her worldly goods and possessions at her decease. I do not remember much of my father save that he possessed an erect, martial bearing, and used to gratify my

girlish fancy by sometimes arraying himself in a fine uniform, 'or he was an officer in the American navy. When I was only six, he was summoned from his long furlough into active service; and, kissing me good-by, he resigned me to Aunt Selina. From that voyage my father never returned. A *coup de soleil* smote him down on the deck of his vessel in the Mediterranean, and he died shortly after. When the government ship arrived on our shores, a bulletin of his death reached us in lieu of himself, whom we fondly expected. It was weeks before I—a ten-year-old child—could mention him without a burst of tears; but afterwards, in the cheerful life of girlhood, my violent grief was subdued. I think, though, it was in those days that I began to cherish my intense love and yearning for the sea. Before, I had thought of it only as the great water whereon my father's ship sailed; but, from the time they brought the news of his death, I thought of it as his grave. We did not live near the coast—Aunt Selina's little estate was inland—but I used to go into the garret, and, seating myself at the window looking eastward, gaze away to the dark blue belt of the far horizon and fancy it the ocean, with every white speck of cloud drifting there a floating ship. So sharp the picture outlined on my mental retina, I saw the snowy sails and tapering spars—the deck where my noble father walked in his officer's uniform, with the star on his breast—I saw the great, red, fiery sun wheel high above his head, the angry darts that struck him, his fall to the deck with his hand to his head—the sailors bearing him down into his state-room—the slow lingering—the death—the burial at sea—all this passed before me, distinct as the features of a panorama. Then, when Aunt Selina's voice summoned me to some light task or duty, I would bear away with me the same pictures to be thought of till nightfall and dreamed of in my sleep.

And at school, too, while the other children drew pictures on their slates, or played at "tit-tat-too" when the teacher's back was turned, or the boys aimed paper bullets at some fly-target on the ceiling, I would turn the leaves of my Olney's Atlas till I came to the map of Europe, and, guiding with my finger an imaginary vessel's track along the Mediterranean, then threading her way through the narrow Gibraltar pass, up round sunny Portugal, and into the wild Biscayan Bay, "here," I would whisper under my breath to some confidential school-mate, "just here, in the Bay of Biscay, my

father died, and the sailors tied a round shot to his feet and buried him in the sea!"

The sea! Henceforth it was a sacred shrine to which my heart was ever turning. No wonder I looked upon it with intensest yearning;—it held my father. Some would have said I should have thought of it but with terror and dread; but not so; I loved it. I used to believe that when the sailors lowered him down, in his bright uniform, and the great green waves parted to receive him, the mermaids took him in their long, beautiful arms, and sung to him as they carried him down to their coral bowers; and I loved to fancy that one of them might have worn the face of my own dear mother. It was a childish belief; but it gave me infinite satisfaction.

But I will now write of other things. At fourteen, Aunt Selina sent me away to boarding-school. The dear old lady had but little book-knowledge herself, but she was pleased that the grand-niece of her care should have every advantage. I was tall at that age—as tall as I am now; and I had my mother's eyes.

At regular intervals for three years I went home on vacation visits; but I think I really enjoyed myself better at school with my books and companions than at the quiet mansion where Aunt Selina lived in her staid, though comfortable, way. I was a favorite with all the girls at the seminary. There was one, Elise Wentworth, my room-mate, with whom I was then very intimate. I think all young people—girls and boys in their teens—have what may properly be termed "a Platonic age," when all the poetry and sentiment of their natures come tumbling uppermost, effervescing like new root beer; and I suppose I was in mine then, for I fancied Elise Wentworth and myself "congenial." We read poetry together, exchanged rings and locks of hair, and vowed eternal friendship. (*En passant*, it is over five years now since I have seen her!) I mention her particularly here, because, as you shall see presently (I am so used to writing for the good public that I fancy the "reader" must be somewhere behind the curtain), through her I first opened the chapter in my life I am now going to relate.

I have already said I am "literary," but not, like Byron, did I "awake and find myself famous," it came gradually; but there was a dim prescience of my future occupation in my school-girl days. A poem, one of the many written in a pink-rose, sentimental mood, saw light in *The Young Ladies' Repository* and *Cas-*

let over the unique signature of "Jacassa," eliciting the admiration of all the seminary girls; but when, one day, Elise Amantha Wentworth—I write her name in full—brought me a number of the *Yale Literary and Scientific Magazine*, published monthly by a class of young juniors at Yale, confidentially imparting that her brother, Montague Livingstone Wentworth, was editor—when she brought me this, and showed me "Jacassa's" poem copied, with complimentary remarks by the editor on "the fair and accomplished young authoress, who, if we mistake not, will make her mark" (query: her X mark?) "on the future song-literature of her land; giving evidence thus early of having quaffed from the Parnassian spring;"—when I read this, then, indeed, I began to imagine that the "divine afflatus" was surely mine by right.

"Oh, Jacassa, you must see my brother Montague!" said Elise. "He's *splendid*! Such an air—so *distingué*! just like a novel hero. I do wish he'd come here—how the girls would envy us him! He wears his hair long, and Byron collars, and he dotes on 'Childe Harold'! I know you and he would be *congenial*! You see I've written him all about you; and what do you think, darling?" and, with a mysterious air, she took from her pocket a little pink note, redolent of jockey-club, and superscribed in a delicate, running chirography:—

"To

THE FAIR JACASSA.

Helicon's Fount.

By Pegasus's Express."

And this was the commencement of my acquaintance with Montague Livingstone Wentworth, this pretty, flattering note, worded so faultlessly and interspersed with poetic quotations—a snare set by a heartless, sentimental college fopling, to entrap a silly-headed, equally sentimental school-girl.

What need to enlarge here? Reader—ah, there comes in "the smell of the shop" again—if you be a woman, who has survived the age when every school-girl fancy looms up a mirage—*le grande passion*—you must have recorded on your brain-tablet similar experiences of your own; and, if you have not, please take my word—Jacassa Selina Bowen, spinster's—for it, that you must be "the exception to the rule," the "one out of the hundred" who have escaped them. I smile now when I think how, as time passed, I loved the author of that little pink, scented note, for I *did* love him with all the strength of a first sentiment. I suppose it

was because of the intensity of my nature. I never do anything by halves; I either love or dislike strongly, unless by chance I sometimes get into that negative state, indifference. But I will record what a devotion I cherished for Montague Livingstone Wentworth, and how, after our correspondence progressed till three score or more of notes had passed between us, and the congenial Elise Amantha had accompanied me home, when I went to spend my last vacation, and the poet-brother came down to pass a leisure week with his divinity at Aunt Selina's, one day, in the little arbor of Aunt Selina's "back garden," he got down on his knees, and, with his hand on the right side of his white Marseilles vest, vowed eternal fealty to "his peerless, genius-dowried Jacassa."

Well, Elise went back to school, to send me little sisterly notes weekly; I remained with dear old Aunt Selina, who was getting feeble, and "the twin of my soul," who had, meantime, weaned himself from his Alma Mater, though professing his intention some time to write a book of poems "that should startle the world," returned to his native town, content meanwhile to step into his father's shoes and country practice as a more sure foothold in this matter-of-fact world than an uncertain ride on Pegasus's slippery back, varying the employment of mixing pills by inditing sonnets "To Jacassa's Eyebrow!" and letters teeming with protestations of never-dying affection and anticipations of that time "in the bliss-fraught future" which "should bring him happiness and Jacassa."

And this was why—because of the jockey-club scented notes, and the flattery, and the protestations, and the sort of shy, silent bliss of reveries and dreams—because of the lock of oiled hair I kept in my writing-desk, and the ring, devised by two hearts transfixed by one arrow, I wore on the "engagement-finger" of my left hand—because of that very natural feeling, common to all hearts, which makes us all want somebody to love and to love us, till sometimes the glamor so blinds our eyes that we mistake the dross for the fine gold—because of all this, for one twelvemonth of my life I walked in a blissful dream along a path of roses.

But the awakening came. The roses turned to commonest flowers—*primroses* or "old maid's pinks," at that! The day came when—but the tears arrest my jesting mood as I write now, and I am saddened, for with that sorrow began the first real experiences of my life—the day came when dear old Aunt Selina died. I loved her; I had brightened some years of her quiet,

lonely life; and of late I had strengthened the feeble, groping steps which, day by day—though I did not know it then—were drawing nearer heaven. I felt a strange, sad loneliness when they pressed the sod over her coffin in the little village graveyard. Were my feelings prophetic? Eighteen, and kinless! But when a letter came from Montague, expressive of love and sympathy, I could but strive to banish my sadness, and, though tenderly cherishing my kind old aunt's memory, imagine that the world held some brightness, after all.

After that, there were strange revelations. Everybody at Eastlake thought Aunt Selina in "comfortable" circumstances; and though I had known that the keen-eyed, ferret-nosed lawyer, Esquire Lynx, had "let" my aunt some moneys, which she had expended in repairs on the place, giving notes for the same, yet from my soul I could not believe but those were fraudulent ones he brought in against the estate at the executors' settlement, covering, as they did, nearly the whole property. Yet there was Aunt Selina's signature, in her cramped, old-fashioned hand. Surmises, if indulged by others, were withheld from me; so, when affairs were settled, it was found that Esquire Lynx's claims covered the whole homestead, and the bequest of "Selina Bowen, spinster," of her whole property to "her beloved niece, Jacassa Selina Bowen," resolved into my receiving but the paltry sum of a few hundred dollars, as residue of the sale of said "property," "when outstanding debts were paid."

To say that I was surprised at this state of affairs and my sense of utter dependence would hardly express my feelings; I was confused, blinded, not knowing whither to turn. From having never known a want, from being the petted child of Aunt Selina's adoption, who, certainly, if in the straitened circumstances the settlement of her estate showed, was never parsimonious towards me in the matter of money—from this to being thrown, as it were, on myself for a time completely unnerved me. It was weeks before I could fully comprehend my position. Meantime, as the executors' sale had taken place, and the homestead had been bid off at public auction, I had gone to board in the family of the village minister, a worthy man, whose wife had been a firm friend of Aunt Selina's. The venerable man only sighed and shook his head, when the place was sold to the highest bidder; but good Mrs. Dean said, in her cheery, comforting way: "Never mind, my dear, don't cry. It won't be long before you'll have a house and home of your

own, and, what is better, somebody to love you, if all we hear of that fine young gentleman who used to come to see you is true. So keep up a good heart, Jacassa! Trials are sent us by One who 'doeth all things well.'" I did not betray my feelings in the kind-hearted woman's presence, but when alone I could not restrain the heart-sick tears, for I had received no letter from Montague for a long time. Had he gone, too, with the rest—Aunt Selina, home, and fortune? But, afterwards, these salt tears left me calmer. There came a mood of searching thought; something of the old spirit that made me, in childhood, seek out on the map for the spot where my father's dead body went down into the deep, sent my mental vision searching the great unknown ocean of the future to lay my finger on the spot where the corpse of a dead love should be buried. Was my gaze prophetic then? I think so; for, when days and weeks went by, bringing me no word of affection, no visit from one who, in the past, had asked permission to guide and share my future—when the "congenial" Elise (who, in the days of my reputed heiress-ship, had scarce allowed a week to pass without some dainty note, commencing "pet" or "darling," found its way to Eastlake) also placed the antipodes of silence between us—then I felt a fine scorn rise up in my heart against these summer friends of fortune, who "stood afar off" when the rough hand of adversity swept over my head. So, one day, with a strength that surprised myself, I enveloped the pink, scented love-notes, the ambrosial lock of hair, the deviced ring, and returned them all to Montague Livingstone Wentworth. I hope it gave him no more pain in the receiving than it did me in the sending. After that, I settled down for a season into a quiet sort of life. I suppose my heart wasn't dead, only benumbed, for I felt its presence yet in the gratitude I had towards kind Mr. and Mrs. Dean, who, when I told them what I had done, said: "Never think of him again, dear; he is not worthy of you. You are our child now." But I think such an experience as I underwent in that time—the suddenly waking from a love-life to find one's self walking henceforth alone, bearing the memory of "not a broken heart, but a broken dream"—tends to make one distrustful, reserved, old before their time. I know it was so with me. I felt little interest in anything or any one outside the home of my kind friends; I shunned society, and, when Frank Dean began to solicit my company to the village lectures, and to manifest a growing sentiment warmer than friend-

ship, I knew that the refusal I felt compelled to give him came from a heart which would not soon again listen to man's love. And then my pride and natural independence of character took alarm; I must not stay in that home to pain these good people by refusing their son's affection; I must go away at once—but whither? I began to cast about for some means of support, for I wished to leave intact the few hundreds, my all, which good Mr. Dean had placed in trust for me. Could I teach? I thought strongly of this plan at first; then another idea occurred. I should have written that, in the year that intervened between my leaving school and Aunt Selina's death, I had followed my *penchant* for literary pursuits by the writing and sending some tales and poems to popular periodicals, for which the honor of "seeing my name in print" had been considered ample compensation; and now, bethinking of the many who follow the pen for a livelihood, I inclined to a publisher my first article for which I asked an equivalent in money. It was returned to me. "It possessed considerable merit, but, owing to the press of matter, obliged to decline. Very sorry not to be able to use," etc. etc. So ran the accompanying note from the publisher. I was disappointed, but not crushed. I do not think I am egotistical by nature, but I knew the article was not devoid of merit, and I re-enveloped it to another publisher of whom I had heard favorably as an encourager of young authors. I waited days, poised between hope and fear. If Mr. G—— decided against me, I should grow despairing. But he did not; he remitted me a liberal price for my manuscript; he also sent a kind, encouraging letter—"he would be pleased to hear from me often in the future." I read that letter with tears in my eyes. I felt that my path was marked out for me; literature should be my profession and the means of my livelihood. Another piece of good fortune came. The editor of a ladies' magazine published in a metropolitan city, for which I had often contributed during that year of leisure, addressed me, stating that he had need of an assistant lady editor. "Pleased with my sprightly, *piquant* style, could I be engaged to edit a certain department and contribute a certain amount at a stipulated price?" This, in no wise conflicting with my desire to contribute to Mr. G——'s publication, as it left my evenings at my disposal, I hailed as a perfect God-send. I dispatched an affirmative answer; I would be in the city by a given date. Now, indeed, I was comparatively independent. I bade my kind friends good-by; I returned the

honest shake of Frank Dean's hand, and promised to remember him with sisterly affection; I went to the scene of my labors.

That was six years ago. I have found friends—some few valued ones, foremost among whom are the kind editor and his gentle lady wife; but I do not go much into society. I write constantly; not so much from the love of the calling, or its reward—though there is rare joy in meeting face to face your own brain-children coming out from their birth-realm, Fancy-land; rare fascination in weaving now a sunny, now a sombre tissue, warp and woof at Imagination's loom!—not so much for these, as to banish, in the busy present, memories of the clouded past. And there is a satisfaction in being constantly employed. No idle hours of lady-like *ennui*, no wearisome moments hanging on my hands! I thank God that He gave me this intense brain, this working nature!

Sometimes there come visions of another life—a blessed home-life—where some strong arm holds me, and stems back the heavy tide of circumstances that press hard against me; where some strong, 'true heart shelters me and will not let the storm beat on my naked head. I hear a deep-toned voice say, tenderly, "My own, my wife!" I feel the clasping arms and dewy lips of little children climbing on my knees; I see a home made beautiful by all the garnitures which refinement can gather around me; but that mood is resolutely crushed back, and I am again alone, writing, writing, in my little boarding-house room, with the saddened heart and weary brain—alone, alone!

And yet, why sigh as I write these words? I should be content; my lot is far happier than many—the wretched, the sin-stricken. I do not envy the finest pallid lady to whom satins, and velvets, and liveried equipages cannot bring freshness and happiness for the world-weary heart throbbing listlessly under her silken bodice. I am young and healthy, and I am happy. The long autumns and winters in the close city are more than compensated by these country sojournings, upon which I enter in the spring-time. I was at Eastlake, last year; the Deans were glad to have me there. Frank met me with kindly heart and hand, and introduced me, with a conscious pride, to his wife and the toddling Frank at her knee. But I do not think it good to stop always in one place, so this season brought me to quiet, country, yet sea-side, Ryefield. I am quite at home here, with good Mrs. Hull and the kind-hearted farmer. I am glad there is little so-called "society" here. There are two or three hotels down at the shore,

but I have no friends there ; and I am glad, for they might think it necessary to draw out the literary lady from her self-imposed chrysalis state, and I would not like to be lionized, even in a small way.

By the way, I have omitted to write that I read, a year or two since, the marriage of Montague Livingstone Wentworth. I liked to have forgotten it. His bride's cognomen was Nancy Maria Hopkins. I remember her—she was at the Seminary—the daughter of a wealthy retired tallow-chandler. The saucy younger scholars used to speak of her as “gawky.”

She had red hair and a *nez retroussé*, and had a habit of putting her finger in her mouth when she missed her recitation. I wonder if Montague Livingstone dowried her with the lock of Ma-cassar-oiled hair and the deviced ring?—I am doubtful concerning the poetical love-notes, for I remember that, at “par’s request,” “Nancy Mariar” was excused from “composition” at the Seminary—I suppose he did—as he did also with himself—for Nancy Maria’s father is dead, and she inherits fifty thousand dollars won in the tallow business.

(Conclusion next month.)

THE ORDEAL; OR, THE SPRING AND MIDSUMMER OF A LIFE.

BY ALICE B. HAVEN.

CHAPTER I.

"This young Austin is a very clever fellow, I understand."

The "clever fellow" blushed up to his forehead with surprise and delight. He could not help overhearing the remark, but it was not his fault. The rich merchant, Anthony Bradstreet, had never been seen, if he had been so inclined, who his next neighbors were, and politeness would not allow the subject of his conversation to let down the heavy book of engravings he was balancing for the pretty, but silly Miss Perkins, and walk out of ear-shot.

"Oh, remarkably clever; not only that, but solid and very high-toned."

Now, when you consider that the last speaker was the president of the college in which Carrol Austin was to graduate the next Commencement, and the querist the father of the young lady that he considered the most lovely, the most faultless, the dearest girl in the world, you can understand how near the hugo *Vue de Paris* came to crushing Miss Perkins's daintily slipped foot.

"Dear me, it's too heavy, isn't it? Your hands quite tremble," said Miss Perkins, good-naturedly. "I think I've seen it long enough. I hope to go to Paris some day—don't you, Mr. Austin?—and see the Madelaine, and the Palais Royale, and the Boulevards for myself. Emily went last year, and brought back the most delightful quantity of gloves and pocket-handkerchiefs. This is a pair of the gloves I have on." And she held up a hand she was very fond of displaying. "She saw that dreadful Louis Napoleon, too. People were actually saying that he intends to make himself Emperor. Preposterous, isn't it? Papa says so."

How she did run on! And there was Mr. Bradstreet talking to Dr. Cogswell yet, more about him, perhaps—who knew? They looked around the room two or three times, but they did not discover him, for he was sheltered behind the broad backs of the twain.

"Of the very highest order," were the last words that came to his ear. "Correct, methodical, prompt."

Now, whether this was said of him or his classmate, Henry Bradstreet, there was a pain-

ful uncertainty, as young Austin offered his arm to conduct Miss Perkins to the library, on her expressed wish to go there. It was not very like Hal, it is true, who was good-hearted, generous, ready for any kind of a lark, but not above using a "pony" for airing his Greek and Latin, dear reader, not himself—and had never been publicly commended for promptitude; "on the contrary, quite the reverse."

"Do you like lemon or vanilla the best?" inquired Miss Perkins, as the tall man-servant, with his tray of ices, appeared in the distance. "I think we might as well sit on this lounge; it seems crowded in the library, and I never can enjoy an ice-cream if I'm standing. The minute I get into a supper-room, I always look around for a sofa, or a chair at all events; I enjoy everything as much again. It makes a great deal of difference whom you get to wait on you at a supper-table. Some people just stand, and stare, and say, 'Shall I get this?' or 'Would you like that?' till there's not a slice of boned turkey or a fried oyster left; and others go straight through and give you everything from chicken-salad to grapes. Some are so careless, too. There's Hal Bradstreet. When Julia Lawrence had her party, he upset a whole plate of stewed oysters on my new tarleton dress. There he is now, talking to his father. I should think he was getting lectured, should not you? Perhaps Dr. Cogswell's been complaining of him; they've been talking together some time."

There was some appearance of a lecture, or, at least, of a distasteful remark. Hal Bradstreet's open face was very expressive of interior disquiet, and shadowed by a slight obstinacy at the same time.

"Don't you think he's rather fond of Ella Beckford?" pursued Miss Perkins, mincing her cream to make it melt faster. "I do. Ella and I used to be very intimate. There he comes now."

"Confound it all, the Governor thinks fellows haven't any preferences," burst forth Bradstreet, Junior, as he reached his friend, regarding Miss Perkins no more than a fly. "He's got some committee or board meeting to attend, and calls me up to say I could see Lucy home,

as if I had nothing else to see after!" How people will cast behind them opportunities that others regard as priceless! Carrol Austin would have given his eyes—that is, if he could have piloted her without them—for that half hour alone with Lucy, and as her protector, too! "Do help a fellow out of it, for I've gone and asked Ella Beckford to be her escort already! I told the old gentleman you'd answer every purpose."

"But your father is so particular, Henry," chimed in little Miss Perkins. "I've heard Lucy say a great many times that he never allowed any of the students to walk with her—anybody but her cousins or you. Isn't the carriage coming?"

"That's the thing of it. John's got a bad cut, and can't drive. We all walked. But he don't mind you."

"Did he say so?"

How far beyond the outward import of the question was the engerness that spoke in every line of that fine young face!

"He said 'very well,' and that's enough. I know it's a bore, but come—that's a good fellow!"

Not that he needed any urging! Far from it! Brothers and friends are so blind, when we think, in our self-convicted cowardice, they have a hundred eyes, and all devoted to spying out our especial preferences. It required all the self-control Carrol Austin was master of to remain quietly by Miss Perkins for the purpose of depositing her empty saucer on the tray, he felt so like darting away to Lucy, and seeing the effect the news of the transfer would have on her. Somebody had asked her to sing in the mean time, and he could not get within a yard of the piano, for the little crowd that hung around her. Miss Perkins thought Lucy's singing a very trifling matter, compared with her sister Emily's grand arias, and beckoned some friends near, and, after a little time, walked away with them. Carrol Austin was very well in his way, ranking first in his class, and, therefore, not to be despised at a college party, especially when he was withal gentlemanly and tall. Miss Perkins delighted in tall men; but then he was poor, so her brother said, and therefore not to be dreamed of as a lover.

"It's a great pity," thought Miss Perkins, revolving the matter in her mind, as they first drew near the piano, "for he talks beautifully, and looks as good as any of us. He doesn't dress 'poor,' like Wiley, of last year's class,

that always looked so seedy, and he was very foolish to tell it, I think. He might have managed some how, as Joe Dalton did, and gone away in debt to everybody. I was very near falling in love with Joe, for the Daltons lived in such style, and he spent money right and left. I thought they must be immensely rich."

So Miss Perkins gave a little, half-fledged sigh, and took the arm of young Trotter, whose father owned no end of cotton mills, and who parted his hair in the middle, and wore an eye-glass, and carried his head on one side, leaving Mr. Austin absorbed in Lucy Bradstreet's foolish little ballads. She sang them very sweetly, though they were only English, and not remarkably new, in a low, sympathetic voice, that thrilled the young, listening heart with a wilder pulse than it had ever risen to before; for the theme was love, as it ever is with the young, and he fancied—could it be all fancy!—that her soft eyes rested on him with a peculiar meaning, as she sang—

"I do not love thee, yet, I know not why,
Whate'er thou dost still seems well done to me;
And often, in my solitude, I sigh
That those I do love are not more like thee."

Perhaps you cannot understand how he felt not long afterwards, when he had shaken hands with kind Lizzie Cogswell, the president's daughter, and made some polite and deferential remarks to the Doctor, and had put on his overcoat in the gentlemen's dressing-room, and was waiting on the flat landing at the head of the stairs for Lucy Bradstreet, taking the jokes of "the fellows" in a good-natured, but rather absent way. The door into the enchanted apartment was ajar, and there was a fluttering of graceful robes now and then, peals of musical laughter, and a general buzz and hum of comment, and of appointment for future engagements.

It took a tremendous length of time for Lucy to draw on those crimson Polish boots, and the soft blue flannel sacque that shielded her lace-covered arms beneath the heavier cloak, and then she seemed to wait at least two minutes, hood in hand, to settle when and how she was to meet Jane Perkins for some shopping they had agreed to do together. But she came out at last, looking, oh, so bewitchingly in the blue "kiss-me-quick," with its nodding tassels and careless knot under her little dimpled chin. Then she tripped on the stairs—Polish boots were so awkward!—and he put out his hand to steady her—he had forgotten to draw on his gloves—and held hers until they were off the

dark stone steps, and she was fairly under his guidance.

"Shall I carry your bouquet for you? Your hand will get cold out of your muff."

"Thank you, but it's no consequence at all; we have plenty of flowers at home, and they are faded."

He took the flowers for all that, and held them so tightly that they would have drooped before that long walk was ended, if they had not already commenced to do so.

He did not have much to say, after all, or Lucy either, but the time was wonderfully short. The pavement was slippery, and that made it necessary that he should hold the arm that rested in his own for the first time in his life very closely, and now and then, when they came to a dull, blinking street lamp, it was "food for the mind," if not for conversation, to look down into the dear, happy face, and draw up, by some strange magnetism, the eyes he sought to glance one moment into his own, and then fall as quickly—the very look he fancied he had met when she sang those words that "still made melody in his heart!" It was no time to think about where this still, rippling current was drifting them, whether upon wrecking rocks and shifting sands, or to the happy islands it seemed to lave in the distance. Young love's dream has seldom any cold calculations of "position," and "income," and "establishment," unless, indeed, the dreamers have the maturely selfish nature of Miss Jane Perkins.

As for Carrol Austin, he could scarcely believe he had not been dreaming, as he trod the worn, echoing staircase of the Hall in which he lodged. The moonlight flooded the bare passages, and guided him to his own lonely room, where he longed to be, to sit down and think it all over. As unlike the fairy chamber in which Lucy Bradstreet "lay down in her loneliness," as were the fortunes of the two who were interchanging thought and half-shaped, misty dreams of the future, was that low, meagrely-furnished apartment. The almost threadbare carpet, in which the original colors were blended into one hue of dinginess, the well-worn, ill-used furniture, the walls scrawled with rough drawings and odd mottoes and designs, the table strewn with books, and newspapers, small articles of wearing apparel, and remnants of a midday lunch, the bed serving the purpose of a sofa to all visitors, and therefore anything but regular in its outlines, and a drapery of necessary but unpicturesque garments in the background—such was the pic-

ture lighted by the single lamp and the paler moonbeams that came in through the curtainless window. There was nothing attractive in the outer landscape, though in summer the smoothly shorn turf of the Campus, its noble, graceful elms, the gleam of white-walled mansions from sheltering masses of foliage, and the distant glimpse of molten silver made by a broad curve in the quiet river, might have sustained the enchantment of the past few hours. Yet he came and sat down in the low, broad window-seat, still holding the drooping flowers, and inhaling unceasingly the intoxicating perfumes of heliotrope, and daphne, and sweet-scented violets. Something was wrapped around the stems—a little glove, soiled, and, therefore, discarded by its wearer, who had left its fellow on the dressing-table with her forgotten fan. How like her actual presence it seemed, for all the ugly rent in the wrist, and the marks of its grateful servitude! He smoothed out the tiny fingers one by one, and drew the glove into something of its old shapeliness. It was like a cast of the hand he had held that night—and the bare recollection of the touch sent that same delicious thrill through every vein—moulded to its form. It had held it, and he pressed it to his lips, as he would have clung to the hand if he had dared, and then thrust it into his bosom.

He turned with a start; but there was no witness of this daring, only the old shadows stretching in uncouth, gigantic shapes over the wall, and moving slowly, as the room vibrated to the tread and shout of later classmates, who had been less innocently engaged, perhaps, and were even later than himself; so he came back to the window, and out to the still silence of the night. The chill dreariness made him shiver. There lay the unbroken snow, crossed by solitary footpaths, glowing desolately in the cold, hard moonlight, and there rose those naked, ice-clad trees, dark, and grim, and immovable as destiny.

He put the flowers away from him involuntarily. Softness, and beauty, and perfume were not for his life. A few months ago it had risen up before him grand and solemn as those trees had then appeared, for all their leaflessness, now as hard and wintry as their aspect to-night. His young, earnest soul had laid upon itself the vow of patient industry to return the unwearied labors of a widowed mother, who gave of her very living to fit him for his post in life, and to rear those younger than himself, who had an equal claim to all that had been lavished upon him. And beyond, there was a

higher self-devotion, which had as yet just whispered its solemn utterances through his soul, of a nobler return, of strength and intellect, and life itself, for a costlier love that had been poured out for him.

But the tempter had taken so fair a guise, so pure a seeming, to lure that heart from its purpose!

CHAPTER II.

"I'm not going to the concert to-morrow night, mother."

"Why, Ellen, what has happened?"

"Nothing new," said the girl, poutingly.

"I've made up my mind; that's all."

"But Mr. Benedict was so good as to give you the tickets, and promise to call for you with Rose. Have you and Rose quarrelled?"

"No, mother. I like her better than any of the girls, but I'm not going with them any more; I never mean to stir out of the house except to church, and I wish I didn't have to go there!" Great hot tears, partly of anger, and partly of mortified pride, plashed down upon the work the child held in her hand. "I never do have anything like anybody else; and I'm ashamed to go to the girls' parties when I cannot have one too; and even if I could, there's no place, except the forlorn old school-room, or right here in this one room. It's too bad, and I might just as well give up trying to be like the rest."

"All because I could not get you a new spring bonnet! Why, Ellen, I am ashamed of you."

"Well, I can't help it."

"And Clara has worn hers two years, with only a new ribbon on it."

"But Clara don't care about such things. She's just wrapped up in books, as Carrol used to be; and Ben has Carrol's old clothes made over, and they do very well, but I'm too old now to be treated like a baby, and I don't see why I can't have things as well as Carrol."

"But you are here at home, with no call to go out except where you are well known, where every one knew your father, and loved him, and are kind and thoughtful for his children. They all know that I teach school, and just how we are situated. It is not expected of us that we should dress and entertain as if we were wealthy."

"Carrol must have everything!" said the girl, still stormily.

"Everything to fit him to appear properly

among strangers, where he is obliged to go out more or less, and where he must be judged more by externals. But I have always tried to dress you, Ellen, so that you might not feel shabby, or old-fashioned, though it is suitable to our position that we should be plain. If my life is spared, and Carrol is the son and brother. I think he is, you shall have every advantage in your turn to finish your education usefully. An education is all I can give my children."

Still the unthankful heart rose and swelled with bitter and selfish longing. So it is that every mother's soul must, sooner or later, be pierced by the ingratitude and folly of those she is ready to sacrifice everything for.

Mrs. Austin went on with her needle-work more sorrowfully for this outbreak. Her life had ever been shaded by many cares, and chastened by heavy trials. Born to wealth, and reared in the midst of indulgences, she had seen "riches take wings" and the loving home circle scattered; even her marriage, which promised to restore her so much of vanished happiness, was ever shaded by the ill health of her husband, who was taken away before little Ben, the baby, could speak his name; and she was left alone once more, with four children to rear and educate, and only the little remnant of her father's property to depend upon.

Sorrow had not left her unthankful or rebellious; it had given her a true estimate of life—only the threshold of existence; beyond its changes was the better, heavenly country, where she was to dwell forever. Here she had her task set by the Master of the Household, and, so far from bending under it, she accepted it joyfully, with new energy, new aims, new hopes of hearing the sentence of reward.

From the first moment of her widowhood, the desire rightly to train her children had conquered the lonely yearning of bereavement; to be to them father and mother both, to gain the firmness and worldly wisdom that their father would have supplied, and to lose none of the watchful tenderness of a mother's love was her steady aim. Many weak and selfish women would have considered themselves unable to do more than feed and clothe these helpless children, grieving under that necessity; but Mrs. Austin knew that this was a small part of a parent's duty, and as soon as her strength allowed, opened a day-school of such pupils as could be gathered, and set herself steadily to the task of providing the means for a complete and necessarily expensive education.

Eight years of patient routine had passed,

sometimes wearisome, sometimes beyond her strength, but ever borne with steady cheerfulness, outwardly at least. If she had her hours of despondency, and days when the accomplishment of her hopes seemed far off and doubtful, they were known only to the Friend whose strength upheld her, and the Father who, in caring for the "lilies of the field and the fowls of the air," gave her a pledge that she should not be forgotten in such things as she had need of.

From Carrol, the eldest of her children, she had never had a disappointment. In intellect and heart, he was all that she could desire; even when a child at her knee, she seemed to enter into her thoughts with a strange, unchildlike sympathy, and learn as by intuition the beautiful faith in God's fatherly providence, and the wondrous debt of love and gratitude he owed to the "dear Jesus" who had come from heaven to be laid in a manger and die in manhood a sorrowful death for our sakes, and, listening to his simple pictures of the beautiful heaven the angels would take him to when he died, if he tried to please God, or the earnest and solemn asking that he might be made good and holy, a new hope sprang up and glowed in his mother's heart, and, like Hannah of old, she "lent him to the Lord as long as he lived."

When Anne went about the house in her dreary, abstracted way, or Ellen's strong will rose up against her mother's authority, or Ben, with the boisterous naughtiness of a strong, healthy boy, made her tremble for the time when he should follow Ellen's example and set her rules at defiance, it was to the thought of Carrol and his future that she turned to brighten the hope for the rest; but Ellen's wilful words made her despond even here, the night of the rejected invitation; perhaps she had been self-deceived, and only indulging a blind partiality in giving Carrol the advantages he had received. Had she been unconsciously wronging her other children for his sake? She felt all that had influenced her—the hope that he would one day stand up in his father's place, and the desire that mind and heart should be fully furnished for the Master's service—but her disappointment with Carrol might be at hand; he might not feel the claims the younger children would have upon him, he might not wish to devote himself to a life of self-sacrifice such as any laborer in the harvest must needs live if they would impress others with the reality of their creed and bring their needs to the scanty wages doled out grudgingly oftentimes by the congregations. Her own health might fail before the rest had

been provided for, it was not as strong now as it had once been, with all her care, and then she had wronged her younger children for a need that existed only in her own imagination perhaps. It was the hardest form in which doubt could come to her, she was so watchful and jealous always of her own motives; but it made her resolve to do what she had shrunk from again and again—set before Carrol her highest hopes and aims for him, and if the answer was a disappointment, she could only pray for strength to bear it.

The day had been warm, almost oppressive, but the evening grew cold and chilly. The very atmosphere added to her depression, as she unlocked her writing-desk, and then rose, as she heard a stir in the adjoining chamber, to see if the children were all asleep. Never, since the night that she had first gathered them around her, fatherless, had she felt such a sinking apprehension of their future. But they were in her care still, sheltered by a home, sleeping softly and deeply, as only the young or those to whom "He giveth sleep" can rest, and she went back to her letter again.

"I have never told you, my son, of the highest aims I have had for you. Whenever you have talked of your future course, you know I have always put you off with 'time enough by and by.' I had two reasons. One—cowardly, perhaps—I have not been ready for a disappointment; and the other, I had hoped you would make an unbiased choice, such as I desired, for I have sometimes seen your thoughts go out that way, and it has made me happier than you could believe. I have your last letter by me. Frank, affectionate, open as you ever were, you tell me of all you are doing and of your friends. I am glad Mr. Bradstreet is so kind to you, and that you try to have a good influence over his son. You know that I have always told you our influence is one of our chief talents. How much less dread fathers and mothers would have of college life were it not for the evil influences that meet their children there!

"I wish I could see the pretty Lucy you have written me so often about this winter; but, Carrol, I need not warn you that she can never be anything more to you than the sister of your friend. Men of wealth ever seek wealth for their children; and, besides, years must pass before you can afford to make any one your wife. Even were she willing to marry a poor man, and her father willing to have her, you could not selfishly bind her to such weary waiting, a vigil that wears out a woman's health

and spirits, in looking towards an unfulfilled destiny.

"It is time now that you should seriously set yourself to consider what you will be. You have no connections to help you on in mercantile life; there is the law, with its slow results; teaching—you have seen something of that; and *the ministry*. My hand trembles as I write it, my dear son, for the wish of my life is inclosed in it. The first-born of old were ever consecrated to God, and when you were a baby in my arms, and I read of this, it impressed me with a strange, haunting force. God had been very good to me, and I desired greatly to make Him some worthy offering, and so far as it lay in my power to train you up for Him, I resolved to do it. What had at first the vagueness of a fancy strengthened into a vehement desire, into the great purpose and hope of my life, to send out one torch-bearer to the multitudes that sit in darkness, to kindle one faint beacon-light that should warn some misguided soul from hopeless loss, to see my child entering on the noblest pursuit this side the grave.

Not that I would have you biased to this by my feeling or the wish on your part to save me from disappointment. Far from it. The offering would be worthless in God's sight, unless it is of your own free will—unless you have yourself felt moved to lay aside all worldly projects and ambitions, or, rather, to merge all ambition into the noblest aim a human heart can have, to be 'a fellow-laborer with Him!' I should only defeat my own purpose, and kindle a strange fire upon His altar.

"Do not write me at once. It requires deep thought, and *more than thought*. I feel very near you to-night, and as if you needed me—as though some solemn crisis in your life had come, and you were turning to me for help. You know where to look for the help and the counsel that your mother could not give, even if she were with you. If you were here, I should only smooth the hair from your forehead, and kiss it softly, and say, 'God bless and keep you, my son!' as I do now."

(To be continued.)

THE TWO WHITE ROSES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY D. L. DALTON.

PARIS is a rich city, and proud of its riches. It has heaps of gold and a great abundance of rubies and diamonds. Its treasures are countless, its luxuries boundless. Its wide-spread mantle wants but one thing to complete its splendor, and that is—flowers. It would hardly be believed that there is a scarcity of flowers in Paris; but it is true, nevertheless. It has fewer flowers than precious stones. That Queen of the world could more easily encircle her brow with brilliants and emeralds than with daisies and orange-blossoms. To be sure, there is a flower-market in this opulent city, where the ladies of the nobility procure their elegant camellias. The botanist goes there for his rare tulip, and the grisette to pluck a sweet-scented gillyflower. But these flowers, like many other Parisian productions, have but a fictitious existence; they are temporarily supported by the artificial heat introduced into the pots, but soon droop and fade away. The purchaser, who thought he possessed a living and healthy bloom, finds, upon his return home, that he is the owner of a sickly, faded flower—a fit emblem of the fleeting pleasures of the world. It should be added, for the credit of Paris, that there are also several magnificent temples dedicated to Flora. In some of the most magnificent streets of the city may be seen splendid stores, kept by beautiful and bewitching young ladies, in which there are handsome miniature altars erected to this goddess. There you will find the budding rose, whose tints resemble the first blush of a modest maiden; the lily—emblem of purity—with its golden petals and alabaster cups; the moss-rose, the favorite

flower of the poets; in a word, a representative of the whole vegetable kingdom. There you will find a cloud of incense from which the garland of the queen of flowers gathers its perfume. Still, the supply of flowers is greatly disproportionate to the other luxuries of the French metropolis. Winter flowers, especially, are very rare, and botanists alone know the great labor which their production costs. They require a pent-up heat, of even temperature, and the most unwearied watchfulness and attention.

Mlle Pascaline Benoit was one of the most renowned florists in Paris. She was an enthusiast in her profession. She was quite poor, but she cultivated her flowers with a poetic zeal which excited the admiration of all who knew her. Her little garden, situated at the outskirts of the city, always contained some prodigy of the vegetable kingdom.

It was midwinter. A fine equipage drew up and stopped in front of Pascaline's door. A fine-looking matron and a charming young lady alighted from the carriage. It was the Marchioness de Regenial and her daughter.

"Mademoiselle," said the Marchioness, "my daughter is to be married the day after tomorrow, and we wish a white rose for her wedding-dress. I am told that you have one."

"Yes, I have two," replied Pascaline.

"Can I see them?" asked the noble lady.

"Certainly," was the response; and the two visitors were conducted to a beautiful rose-bush bearing two half-blown roses, which shed a most delicious perfume.

"Can't I have both of them?" inquired the Marchioness.

"No, madame," answered Pascaline, with a sigh; "one of them is already promised."

"Then I will take this one. What is the price?"

"Two louis."

"Here is the money. Send the rose to my hotel, Rue Saint Honoré."

Pascaline bowed politely, and reconducted her wealthy customers to the door of her humble abode.

"How fortunate!" thought she. "Forty francs! With this sum I can pay my rent, and save myself from being turned out. O my dear mother!" she exclaimed, "from thy happy place in heaven, thou still guardest and protectest thy daughter!"

That night was one of sadness to Pascaline. It was the eve of the anniversary of the death of her mother, a good and pious woman, who had cultivated in her daughter two chaste affections—love of God and love of flowers. She wept as she reflected upon the last moments of that adored mother, whom God had called to himself. It was a cold night. Death had already seized upon its victim. The weeping daughter sat by the bedside. The dying mother said, in a faint but sweet voice—

"Pascaline, are our white roses still living?"

"Yes, mother," was the reply.

"Then bring them to me, that I may enjoy them once more."

The daughter brought them. They were two beautiful full-blown roses upon one branch.

The doctor said that the odor of these flowers might injure the patient.

"No, never mind," she said; "these roses, like my child, will live long after me. Pascaline, give me one of them. Bury this one with me." A few minutes afterwards, she breathed her last.

While she lay a corpse, the rose was placed in her hand; but, as the dead body was placed in the coffin, the leaves of the flower fell off. She was buried, and the grave had scarcely closed when the daughter made a solemn vow, as chaste and tender as the heart that inspired it.

The night was thus passed in prayer and filial remembrance. Next morning, she resumed her daily task in the garden. She recollected that she had engaged to send a rose to the Marchioness, and she went to pluck it; but—sad to relate—one of the flowers had withered away. But a single rose now remained.

The proprietor came and demanded the payment of his rent.

"Sir," said Pascaline, "I am unable to pay you."

"How is that? You have money," said the landlord, reminding her of the two louis which he had learned she had received from the Marchioness.

"That is no longer mine. The white rose has withered and died. The money is to be returned."

"But here is another rose remaining; why not send it?"

"That is already promised; all the gold in the world would not purchase it!"

"Then," responded the irritated proprietor, "you must prepare to leave at once. I can't allow tenants to occupy my property for nothing."

"You shall be obeyed," answered the girl, calmly.

The Marchioness, upon receiving the money which she left with Pascaline the day before, hastened to the garden for the purpose of learning why the rose had not been sent. She was informed that Mlle. Benoit had just gone out with a white rose in her hand. The Marchioness turned and saw her walking down the street. Prompted by curiosity to see where she was going to, she resolved to follow her.

Pascaline entered a cemetery. She knelt at the grave of her mother; and, after planting the rose upon it, she exclaimed: "O my mother! accept this pledge of my remembrance! Receive this flower which thou lovedst so much, and which my own hands have cultivated for thee. Intercede for thy poor child, who is this day without protection or hope!" And with her tears she bedewed the wooden cross, which was the only monument that marked the resting-place of that beloved mother.

The Marchioness, moved to tears, retired unperceived.

Next day, Pascaline was preparing to leave.

"Where are you going?" inquired her companions.

"I must leave you," was the reply.

"Why?"

"Because I can't pay my rent."

"But your rent is paid for two years."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes; here is the receipt."

Pascaline was astounded; but she soon comprehended the pleasant truth. That evening, a well-dressed servant delivered her the following note, inclosing two hundred louis:—

"**MADemoiselle:** I know all. I know you have given to your mother the flower with which I wished to adorn my wedding-robe. I have a mother whom I adore, and can appreciate your

maternal devotion. I therefore take this opportunity of expressing my sympathy with you in such heartfelt proof of filial affection. Please accept of the inclosed as a pledge of my remem-

brance. I hope you will not refuse me this privilege of commencing my married life by honoring filial piety. Your sincere friend,
AMÉNAIDE DE KROENIAL.

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THE UNRULY MEMBER.

BY MARION HARLAND.

"CORa, CORa, will nothing cure you of your sinfully careless habit of speech?"

"Auntie, auntie, will nothing cure you of your frightfully sober habit of speech?"

"Never, while assured, as I am now, that mine are the words of *truth* and soberness," rejoined the elder lady, with an emphasis that was somewhat severe, yet not unkind.

But Cora Manning only laughed—the sportive laugh of a disposition as sweet as heedless. Throwing herself upon the carpet at her aunt's feet, she folded her hands with a pretty affectation of penitence, and looked up into the eyes which she knew could not meet hers without an answering smile.

"You are all primed for giving me a long, delicious scolding, I perceive, auntie, so I will not disappoint you. It will remind me of dear old times. Please define, however, in the outset, what is the precise nature of the habit you condemn by such an ugly name. Am I 'sinful' and 'careless' in grammar or composition, or do you object to the subject-matter of my 'speeches'?"

"You are an educated lady, Cora. This fact should be sufficient of itself to preserve you from inaccuracies in the structure of your sentences, and your style is generally graceful and pleasant."

"Good! There is one drop of sweet to reconcile me to swallowing the abundantly bitter dose which is to come."

"I wish that I could indeed make it so bitter as to be remembered," said Aunt Janet, with increasing gravity. "I should have more hope, then, that you would set yourself seriously to

work to correct a great, and, I fear, a growing evil."

"I am getting very impatient, auntie," again interrupted the saucy girl. "As they say in public debates, 'Question! question!'"

"My first question is this, my dear: Do you recollect what was your salutation to Miss Healy as she broke up our confidential chat this morning—the talk you had devoutly hoped would not be spoiled by any third person, no matter how agreeable at most other times?"

"I cannot say that I do, ma'am; I hope it did not betray my real feelings too plainly. There is no need that I should inform her that, instead of classing her among the 'agreeables' aforesaid, I have set her down at the top of the first column in my list of 'bores.' Whatever I may have said in my intense vexation, she bears me no malice for my lack of politeness, for she sat with us two mortal hours."

"One and a quarter, Cora, by the clock," corrected Aunt Janet.

"It seemed to me to be nearer four," said Cora; "and then she apologized elaborately for 'hurrying off before'—as she phrased it—'she had half talked out.' That is a pet saying of hers, by the way. The adage that 'half a loaf is better than no bread' does not hold good in this instance, I am sure."

"Yet you were at as much pains to convince her that she had paid a brief call as you were, at her entrance, to tell her that she was 'the very person of all your acquaintances who you were wishing would call upon Aunt Janet immediately.'"

"Did I say that? I am delighted, in raptures

at my graciousness of hospitality—at a display of urbanity so independent of circumstances!" cried Cora, clapping her hands. "No wonder she stayed such an unmerciful length of time. How comfortable I must have made her feel!"

"And me as thoroughly uncomfortable," continued Aunt Janet. "I have never regarded insincerity and falsehood as synonyms, although it appears that you do. But to proceed. I thought you told me that Mr. Miller left town but two days ago?"

"So he did—on Tuesday."

"And that he made you a visit on Monday evening?"

Cora blushed slightly. "Of course! You do not suppose that he would have gone away without bidding me 'Good-by'?"

"If my memory serves me rightly, you added, likewise, that you expected him back on to-morrow?" the inquisitor went on to say, in the same quiet, confident tone.

"Yes, ma'am, it was his intention, when he left, to return at that time, and"—dimples breaking over her cheeks—"I do not believe he will encounter any temptation potent enough to detain him longer in the country."

"Yet"—Aunt Janet spoke very slowly here—"when Miss Healy rallied you—coarsely, I allow—upon 'the cheerfulness with which you endured the absence of your handsome beau,' you protested that you 'had not seen him for an age—a week or more,' pretended ignorance of his departure for the country, avowed a like want of knowledge as to the probable period of his return, and finally, in reply to her inexcusably rude interrogatory, 'Come, now, Cora, are you engaged to him or not? Everybody says that you are, and the wedding is to come off in the spring'—you said, promptly, and with seeming earnestness, 'Everybody is wrong, then, in this, as in many other things. Mr. Miller is a friend of mine; he never has been and never can be more, if I continue in my present frame of mind.'"

"Mercy, Aunt Janet, you make my blood run cold! You remind me of a judge summing up the evidence against one convicted of a capital crime—murder in the first degree—nothing less flagrant. Surely, you did not wish me to make a confidante of the most notorious tattler in the city, in sheer compassion for the poor woman, to gratify her overweening curiosity?"

"Far from it; but I would have preferred seeing you commit this indiscretion to hearing a deliberate falsehood from the lips of my brother's child, one whom I love as my own daughter."

Tears sprang to Cora's eyes. "'I, Aunt Janet? How can you talk so cruelly?'"

"Judge for yourself, my dear. Every word we utter is either true or false. Bring your conversation of the past hour to this test, and how does it appear?"

"In love all things are fair," said Cora, gayly. "Everybody equivocates, or, if driven too hard, flirts outright, when—when situated as Horace and myself are."

"'Everybody is wrong, then,' as I heard a sensible young friend of mine remark, not a month since. I understand and honor the delicacy which causes a woman to shrink from unravelling her heart-secrets to such prying meddlers as is this Miss Healy; still, I believe that a mild but dignified resolution not to gratify them would be a more effectual quietus to her inquiries than was the denial she evidently discredited, positively though it was uttered. I do not know your betrothed husband, but, if what you and others have told me of his character be correct, I doubt whether he would sanction the rule of lawful prevarication—'fibbing,' you term it—laid down by 'everybody,' and adopted by yourself."

"Horace has chosen me with his eyes open," returned Cora, a little resentfully. "To him, at least, I am no dissembler."

"Never be, my darling!" said the old lady. "You are too young and happy to understand how much of misery a single falsehood or the appearance of deception may bring upon those whose hearts and lives should be open as the day to one another."

With what sad experience of her own wedded life—ended years ago, by her husband's death—Aunt Janet was, in remembrance, dealing, it does not now behoove us to inquire. Cora felt that self-reproach or an unforgotten sense of wrong received lent solemnity to the warning, and that further trifling on her part would be unkind. Gladly did she, for the first time in her life, hail the termination effected by other callers to a *tête-à-tête* interview with her favorite aunt.

To Mrs. Barrett, better known to her circle of associates as "Aunt Janet," had been committed the care of Cora during her mother's invalidism, a tedious spell of several years' continuance. The improved health of the latter, and the removal to another town of the more judicious and not less affectionate aunt, had subjected the girl to a different course of training. Of late years, Mrs. Barrett's visits at her brother's home had been short and infrequent, and it was, therefore, with emotions of no ordi-

nary pleasure that the family received her acceptance of their invitation to spend with them the winter which was to end Cora's singleness. To the last-mentioned member of the household the arrangement was fraught with peculiar delight, if for no other reason than because it was to bring the realization of a cherished desire, viz., that her lover should see and appreciate that best beloved of friends, the foster-mother whom she never wearied of describing and extolling to him.

Cora had been universally admired since her *début* in general society, two seasons before—adulation which had failed to impair the many domestic virtues that made her the pet of the home she now brightened, and fitted her, in most respects, to become the sun and centre of the more narrow sphere she ever adorned in Horace Miller's dreams of his future. Whether it were the warm breath of flattery, producing in the fertile soil the legitimate fruits of an undue ambition to shine and to please, that had brought to light less lovely traits and tendencies, defects that were grievous blots upon the otherwise fair page of character, or whether these had been more slowly developed under a somewhat loose family government, Mrs. Barrett could not decide. Her upright mind only detected and recoiled at the unlooked-for blemish, and love united with conscientiousness in urging her to do her utmost to check the noxious growth. Her rebuke was taken as kindly as it was given. Aunt Janet sighed as she caught herself almost wishing that her adopted child's temper were less even and sunny, at least that her nature were less mercurial, so evident was it that, an hour after such grave admonitions had been pressed upon her consideration, not a rankling recollection of what had transpired remained to disturb her enjoyment of the day's employments and recreations.

Certain it was that no sombre thoughts clouded the joyous mood in which she came flying to her aunt's room, the next evening. Breathless with her rapid ascent of the stairs, she could not speak for a moment; nor was there need for words. Aunt Janet's pleasant remark interpreted the expression of her radiant countenance: "He is here, I see; and you would like to have me behold and be seen by my future nephew."

Cora nodded impatiently, and went on emptying her aunt's lap of the sewing it contained, upsetting the work-box by the operation.

"Never mind it," observed Aunt Janet. "There will be plenty of time by and by to gather up my spools and patchwork. You do

not suspect me of any intention to enact *Madame de Trop* very long on this the evening of his arrival."

She was beguiled into a more protracted sitting below than she had anticipated. Prepared as she was to approve her niece's choice, confirmed by her father's endorsement of its wisdom, Aunt Janet was agreeably surprised. There was a mingling of gentleness and dignity in Mr. Miller's manner, a union of heart and intellect in his conversation, which left no room for wonder that Cora should regard him as the embodiment of all that is to be loved and respected in man. The plighted pair were a contrast in behavior and temperament, but one that formed an interesting study. Cora's vivacity and piquant modes of expression never seemed more fascinating than when tempered, not repressed, by a certain deferential appeal in manner or tone to his stronger mind and superior judgment. Seen thus, she was the charming, winning woman; while in him the decided opinions of one perfectly conversant with his subject, independent in belief and in its declaration, were so softened by his style of addressing her as to draw her on to a freer revelation of her sentiments, rather than awe her into reserve. "He could never be harsh with me, however deeply I might offend him," Cora had said, that day, to her aunt. Mrs. Barrett acknowledged, as she watched them together, that this was not a girlish boast of unfounded exultation—that, while Horace Miller was not the man to look lightly upon any deviation from the path of rectitude, nor perhaps to submit tamely to personal affront, there was nevertheless in him a large-hearted charity and generosity which would overlook and forgive faults, even crimes, in one whom he loved.

Cora rattled on merrily, to overcome her trifling embarrassment at the novelty of her position in her aunt's sight. "You are aware," she said to Mr. Miller, "that I lived with Aunt Janet all my life before I was grown. Until within a year or two back, I knew no other home than hers. Then she suddenly awoke to the fact that I was an incorrigibly troublesome article of household furniture, and bundled me back upon my poor, dear father's hands, as other merchants do unprofitable and damaged wares."

Aunt Janet's smile was painfully constrained. "Cannot she speak without exaggeration? Into what trouble may not this foolish, worse than foolish practice lead her?" was her mental comment, as she compared Cora's "facts" with the true statement of the case. The period of Mrs

Barrett's guardianship of her young relative was comprised between Cora's eighth and thirteenth years, and the "year or two back" signified the lustrum that had elapsed since Mrs. Manning's partial restoration to health, her daughter being now nineteen.

"Your friend, Miss Healy, did us the honor of spending the entire forenoon of yesterday here," said Cora, archly.

"I trust the favor was properly appreciated by the recipients," answered Mr. Miller, in a like strain. "She quite 'talked herself out' for once, I suppose."

"By no means, my good sir. That shows what injudicious you are disposed to do to her colloquial talents. Her lament at tearing herself away from us, as the dinner-bell rang—she having come before the breakfast things were removed, while the flavor of coffee and buckwheat-cakes 'lingered here still'—had the accustomed pathetic burden, 'Not half talked out, my dear creature!'"

Her comical mimicry of the gossip was highly amusing to Mr. Miller, but Aunt Janet bethought herself of her resolution to retire early, and did not feel that its execution involved any self-denial on her side.

"Poor child!" she sighed, as she laid her head upon the pillow. "Oh, that mothers would teach their children the worth of that pearl of great price—truth, pure and undefiled! Cora's are only idle words, it is true, but for every one of these we read that we 'shall be called into judgment.'"

Among Cora's visitors of the following day was Ellen Miller, Horace's sister. The girls' confabulations were always interesting, for the engagement was known to the Miller family, and Ellen was, moreover, the most intimate associate of Cora at school and in society.

"I chanced to meet Miss Healy, as I was making a call yesterday," she said, suspending the discussion of more important matters. "What an unscrupulous gossip she is!"

"What fresh evidence did she grant you of this propensity?" asked Cora.

"Why, you will not believe it, but, in my presence and hearing, she brought forward the subject of your engagement to Horace, and flatly contradicted it as an absurd rumor, quoting you as her authority! You had, she declared, denied to her that there ever had been anything of the kind, and intimated that you had rejected Horace's proposals from the beginning; and, to wind up the farce, she represented how you had implored her to rectify popular impressions on this head!" Cora was dumb

with dismayed surprise. "Did you ever hear a more shameless falsehood or a bolder stroke of impertinence?" continued the indignant sister. "And to use your name to foist it off upon the community!"

"What did you say?" faltered Cora, whose changing color was to Ellen only the reflection of her own heat.

"Oh, she did not stop there! She referred to me for my opinion! I informed her, curtly, that she must not expect either corroboration or denial from me, since the alternatives were to cast discredit upon your word, or to betray my brother's confidence. If he were a discarded lover, you were the person most likely to be aware of your own act; if accepted, it was but natural that I, as his sister, should be apprised of the event. I can laugh now, when I think how she withered down as I concluded my speech with a frigid 'good-morning;' but I was not so sensibly cool in talking the affair over with Horace, last night."

"With Horace?" Cora's heart stood still.

"Yes. Is there anything so surprising in that? One would think, you little goose, that he was in danger of believing the ridiculous tale, from your terrified look! 'A likely story!' he said, when it was finished. 'Cora is the most truthful girl alive, and Miss Healy is the most—well, no matter what! A toad cannot harm a star, let it spit venom from night to morning.' There's a compliment for you, my little lady! Are you not obliged to Miss Healy for having served as the means of obtaining it?"

There was too much of the true woman about Cora for her not to feel a pang of compunction at the necessity of submitting to this unmerited, ill-bestowed praise. The consciousness that in accepting it she was wronging another, however deservedly unpopular that other might be, was a poignant reflection. She became abstracted and pensive, revolving in her mind her folly—she gave it no harsher title—and its present consequences, and determining to be more watchful of her tongue in future. Alas for the repentance which is based upon conviction so imperfect! for the reformation preceded by so partial a view of the nature and extent of transgression committed!

Ellen was speaking of Aunt Janet when her friend again listened. "I regret that Mrs. Barrett should have selected this morning for her shopping expedition; I am impatient to see her. But I hope to have many other opportunities of improving so desirable an acquaintance, as she is to pass the winter here. You have visited

her frequently since her arrival at B——, have you not?"

"Oh, often!" Cora really thought that she was speaking sensibly and truthfully of the three visits she had paid her aunt in her present residence.

"She lives in the suburbs, or nearly without the corporation limits of the town, I think I have heard," pursued Ellen.

"Almost in the country; but the outskirts of B—— are more eligible as building lots than any street in the city proper. The situation of aunt's house is lovely, and the neighborhood charming beyond description."

"Did you ever hear of a Mrs. Chester, thereabouts? Do you know whether there is a lady of that name, a widow with one child, I think, a resident of B——, or its vicinity?"

"Indeed I do! Her grounds almost adjoin Aunt Janet's. She is very wealthy, keeps up a princely establishment, is quite the leader of the ton, courted and adored by a host of admirers. Are you acquainted with her?"

"I have never seen her," began Ellen; but Cora, volatile as usual, interrupted her.

"Then you have missed the sight of a handsome, a queenly woman. She might rival her daughter in belleship if she chose, but she is too dignified to listen to a whisper of such a thing. I admire her greatly."

"You have met her, then?"

"Scores of times. She and Aunt Janet are extremely intimate. One of the most pleasant days of my life I owe to her hospitality. Her lawn, and gardens, and park are a perfect paradise. In strolling through them, one forgets that there are unsightly objects or painful subjects in the world."

"You alluded to the daughter," said Ellen. "Her fame as a belle has reached my ears before this. Is she as admirable as her mother?"

"Quite as beautiful in person, and more winning in demeanor," rejoined Cora. "She is witty, without being sarcastic; accomplished, yet not pedantic; affable, without affectation. At the parties we attended together, she was the most elegant, and at the same time the most simply-attired, lady in the room. Her kind heart gives a certain inimitable grace to her most trivial action. I loved Mary Chester from the earliest moment of our meeting, and parted from her with more regret than I experienced in leaving all the rest of my friends in B——."

"I am afraid I shall grow jealous of your enthusiastic affection for her, if she makes us the visit our parents have planned so long," said

Ellen. "However, I will take lessons of her in amiability, and try to rejoice in her pleasure at meeting one she knows and loves, amongst so many strangers."

"Why, you said you had never seen her!" exclaimed Cora.

"Nor have I. That treat is yet in store for me. Our mothers were schoolfellows and boon companions in their girlish days, and their correspondence has not ceased through all the years that have brought age and cares upon both. Recently, there has been a deal of conference respecting an exchange of visits. Several times have been actually set, which have passed without the accomplishment of the important event. At present, the scheme is for Mrs. Chester and Mary to come to us about the latter part of January; but hope deferred has rendered us incredulous of its final fulfilment."

Cora brightened visibly. Almost two months off, and an uncertainty at the best, which would, unquestionably, be the worst for her! No need for her to brood upon the idea that she had given Ellen an erroneous and unpardonably highly-colored version of the history of her association with the Chesters. She had seen them repeatedly at church and in other public assemblies; had scrutinized the daughter across the room at one large party, where her chaste elegance of apparel and engaging behavior made her the observed of all eyes. Nay, Cora had even stood next her at supper, and received a graceful apology for a slight injury done to her robe by a falling spoon from Miss Chester's saucer, as her attendant was in the act of handing it to her. Mrs. Barrett, once in a great while, exchanged calls with her more fashionable neighbors, but her retired habits formed too decided an opposite to their gay life to make intimacy likely or possible. The day spent at the Chester mansion was a picnic, held during the absence of the proprietors, and by permission of the steward, in the park of noble old trees that constituted the principal attraction of the place. Cora would have blushed at the suspicion that she had stooped to subterfuge to exalt her personal importance in the eyes of Horace's connections, yet this motive was the spring that had hurried her into culpable misrepresentation. An uncomfortable foreboding would, notwithstanding her attempts to feel easy and unconcerned, find entrance to her thoughts for an hour or so after Ellen's departure, but her native and habitual buoyancy enabled her to shake it off.

"I fear that Horace is taking an imprudent step in this new venture of his," said Mr.

Manning, one morning. "He is a sagacious man of business for one so young; but he is young, and, it may be, has not counted the cost and risk of extending his operations in these troublous times."

"He impresses me as a person of singular judgment for his years," said Aunt Janet, noticing Cora's uneasy look. "Have not his actions heretofore been characterized by prudence?"

"Yes, I suppose they have," commenced her brother, who was a cautious man, and slow of speech.

Cora broke in, eagerly: "Oh, papa! you know that he is discreet. I have heard you say, five hundred times, that he had the oldest head you ever saw upon young shoulders. It is unkind to depreciate him now, when this is the only measure of doubtful propriety he has ever adopted."

"While the wisdom of the measure remains a question, it is but fair that he should have the benefit of the doubt," remarked the ever kind aunt.

Mr. Manning patted his daughter's head. "Agreed, with all my heart! You must not fly out at your father, puss, until you are sure that he means to find fault with a noble friend of yours, whom we all like, although there are degrees of fondness amongst us."

"But you do not really apprehend loss for him, do you, sir?" inquired Cora.

"I cannot say that I do, dear; I merely intimated that his course was a bold one; I feared lest it should prove unwise also, in view of the breakers ahead of business men. I do not understand his drift, but I imagine that he does, so it's all right, perhaps."

"He will outride the breakers, if any one can," said Cora, confidently. "His is a steady eye and hand."

"And a true heart, you might have said," subjoined Aunt Janet, as her niece stopped, confused at the warmth she had manifested in her lover's defence. "Might not a word of caution from you be of use to him?" she continued to Mr. Manning.

"I would have spoken it, had he consulted me at the beginning," was the reply. "I fancy that matters are now in such a state of forwardness that objections would dishearten him, without altering his purpose. My fears may be false prophets, after all. We will hope for the best, and let him have his own way."

Horace did not appear very sanguine as to the result of his enterprise, when he unfolded his plan to Cora. "It may be that I have been rather precipitate," he said, "have trusted too

implicitly to the representations of others who ought to be better informed in these affairs than I am. I am getting timid nowadays, I have so far greater happiness at stake than formerly. Something more than my own comfort or profit depends upon my success or failure. My pride and joy in our mutual relations is still so new and precious that I am in continual dread of losing it—the common fate of those who have become rich suddenly. Forgive me, love, for troubling you with pecuniary projects. I am ashamed of my selfishness in unburdening my heart of its cares, the details of which must be annoying to you."

"Nothing is annoying or uninteresting that relates to you," answered Cora, with an ingenuous affection for which her auditor honored and blessed her from his inmost soul. "I am troubled, but it is at seeing you cast down. I should be more distressed, if you showed a disposition to defraud me of my right to sympathize with you. Have you any reason, apart from your presentiments, for doubting the expediency of your recent transactions?"

"None, if I except the ominous nods and sighs of a few croakers, and the lowering aspect of the commercial horizon. I called several times at your father's office, while the business was undecided, in the hope of persuading him to the gift of a few words of advice, but was invariably so unfortunate as to find him out or engaged. Has he passed any opinion upon my proceedings in your presence?"

Cora hesitated. The truth, unpalatable as it would be, was upon her lips; then a second glance at his anxious face summoned to her memory her father's concluding remarks: "Objection would dishearten, without altering his purpose. We will hope for the best, and let him have his own way." "We were speaking of the subject yesterday," she replied, as if trying to recall the conversation. Her courage failed fast at seeing his intent expression.

"Well," he urged, as she paused again, "did he pronounce me a headstrong speculator?"

"No, indeed! He declared his entire confidence in your talents and judgment."

"Excepting as I have displayed them in this one case," suggested Horace, with an attempt at gayety.

"He made no exception, but was hopeful for this, as for the rest of your undertakings."

"Ah! he approved it, did he?" exclaimed Horace, joyfully. "This is too good news to be true! Are you sure that there was no dissatisfaction, no prophecy of evil, mingled with the grateful sentence?"

"He said that yours was a steady eye and hand, which, united with a true heart, made failure almost impossible," said Cora, proud of the enlivening effect of her communication. "Aunt Janet was not backward in expressing her cordial assent to this."

She was doing him a signal favor in thus turning the bright side of the picture to him—in unloading his mind of fears that would impede his progress.

"You are a comforting angel," he said, fondly. "It is almost a luxury to be despondent now and then, so sweet is the cure. I am unwilling to confess how utterly the knowledge of your father's sentiments has revolutionized my feelings. He would have bestowed his counsel very sparingly, had I solicited it in person. Conscious of this peculiarity of his, I did not persist in my design of wresting an opinion from him. I have boundless confidence in his sound sense and farsightedness. I came here, to-night, depressed and irresolute. It was my wish to see him for a few minutes in private, and ascertain, if I could, how he stood affected with regard to this somewhat bold enterprise. I was ready—more than ready—eager to abandon it at the eleventh hour, at a single dissuading word from his mouth. How happy am I that I made you my confidante instead, and, by this manœuvre, became possessed of his most candid decision, unbiassed by any desire to conform to my inclinations!"

"Had you not better consult him, as it is?" asked Cora, faintly.

"O no! There is no necessity or propriety in doing so. He is careful to a fault, and never would have employed the language you have quoted, had he not been altogether satisfied with the wisdom of my course."

"The language you have quoted!" How mockingly conscience repeated the phrase, as Cora tossed upon her sleepless bed!

"I wished to spare him needless pain," she alleged, in excuse; "I meant it for his good. It cost me a struggle to speak as I did; but could I bear to see him sad, and not strive to console him by any sacrifice of my comfort? How could I foresee that he who is generally so independent in forming plans, so resolute in their execution, was prepared, on this occasion, to be swayed by a word from another? I hope no evil will come of it. I will not allow that he can be defeated by any enemy; he is bound to succeed."

"If he should fail—and failure has come to others as keen of sight and brave of heart—who is to be blamed for it?" sneered the tor-

mentor; and Cora, dumb at this home-thrust, cried herself to sleep over the bare imagination of this sequel to her "well-meant" consolation.

A month went by, and nothing had occurred to arouse the fears which had sunk into a lethargic slumber almost as quickly as the pillow wet by her tears was dry. Life was one continued smile of love and beauty to the betrothed maiden. Preparations for the marriage were going forward steadily and quietly. Friends gathered lovingly about her whom they were to resign to care yet more tender and constant, when spring should furnish her first flowers to grace the bridal feast.

It was on a balmy day, which she could have fancied had been sent in advance to remind her most vividly of the bliss of the approaching season, that Cora left home on a mission of mercy—to carry some of the sunshine with which her soul was filled to the chamber of sickness and languishing. Constance Remer was a universal favorite with her associates, each one of whom she converted into a friend. Young, loving, and beloved, she tasted, with a glad and thankful heart, of earth's best treasures, until the Father, All-merciful as All-wise, interposed to save the tempted soul from idolatry. Very gentle was the summons—painless and gradual her withdrawal from an existence whose every hour had been marked by its blessing and its corresponding joy; so calm her passage towards the haven of never-ending happiness that she, and, what was more remarkable, those who were nearest and dearest to her, but dimly suspected the truth. It was, therefore, with nothing of fear, with hardly a shade of solicitude in her manner or feelings, that Cora inquired concerning the invalid's state, of the physician, as she happened to meet him about a square from Mr. Remer's dwelling. Dr. Merrill was a blunt man, when it suited his humor and convenience so to be. At that instant, he was pondering upon Constance's case—not weighing the chances for and against her recovery, but speculating mournfully as to the greatest length of her stay among those who little dreamed of the impending woe. His reply to Cora was abrupt and startling:—

"She is as well as she ever will be again, poor thing!"

"Doctor," ejaculated Cora, "do you mean that—" She could proceed no farther.

"I mean that she is *dying*," returned the Doctor, wheeling about, and joining her in her walk. "She may live three weeks; she may not see three more suns rise in this world. It

would not be a matter of surprise if to-morrow's sun shone upon her lifeless body."

They walked a little way in silence. Then Cora queried, tremulously, "Is she aware of her condition?"

"No. Why should she be? She is ready for death; that her life has proved, better than any dying triumphs could do. If she were not, it is too late to begin the work. She has no unsettled worldly business to attend to, and that is, to my notion, the sole reason that justifies one in molesting the sick in the hour of mortal extremity. Doctors and friends often bungle wretchedly on this point. No! no! I believe in no such mis-called kindness. Let the child pass away peacefully. Human nature is alike, the world over. She would feel alarmed at the near prospect of dissolution, little cause as she has to dread an exchange of worlds; or, grief at leaving those she loved might be as disastrous, and hasten the event which it is our aim to delay. To reveal the truth would be an act of absolute cruelty—downright inhuman!"

They were at Mr. Remer's gate, and, with an additional injunction to Cora "to do her prettiest to cheer his patient," the Doctor bade her "Good-day."

On the threshold of the house, another warning awaited her. The door was opened by a kind neighbor, Constance's nurse for the day. "Walk in!" she said, in a louder tone than seemed advisable, considering the proximity of the sick-room. "Constance will be very glad to see you." In a whisper, she continued: "She saw you from the window, talking with Dr. Merrill, and will ask you what he thinks of her. She is nervous and down-hearted to-day, so, if he did say anything unfavorable, don't hint it! Agitation would be fatal, in her present weak state."

The dying girl was propped up in an easy chair by the window, and beside her sat Ellen Miller. The placid face of the latter in a measure quieted Cora's excitement, or her nerves and courage would have been severely shaken by the wistful gaze riveted upon her, as she stooped to kiss Constance's hot forehead. "How are you to-day, dear?" she inquired.

"I cannot tell, Cora; I doubt whether I am as well as they would persuade me into believing. I fear, sometimes, that it will be a tedious season before I recover, if I ever do. This increasing weakness does not promise the return to health about which the Doctor and others talk to me. Do you suppose that they *could* deceive me, and I sick almost unto death, Cora?"

"What an absurd fancy!" said Cora, playfully. "Your sickness has produced a radical change, indeed, if it has taught you suspicion, and of those whom you love. Fie! I, for one, am disposed to resent the implication."

Constance laid her thin hand within that of her schoolmate. "Do not be displeased," she said, with the plaintive simplicity of a child; "but this dread haunts me. Nothing but love and kindness moves them to tell me what they do; still, I cannot help wondering if this fear of causing me pain is not tempting them to blind me, as long as they can, to the fact, the solemn truth that I may die of this illness."

"Dear Constance," said Ellen, "why brood upon this thought? Be sure that your earthly friends would not knowingly mislead you, and, should they err in their opinion of your situation, what is there so terrible in death? Remember in whose hands are the issues of life. If it pleases your Heavenly Father to call you home, are you afraid or unwilling to go?"

Tears gathered in the eyes large and bright with the insidious disease. "Not afraid, Ellen. I learned, long ago, to trust and love Him, and I know He is able to keep all that is committed unto Him. I do try to say, uncomplainingly, 'Thy will be done!' but it is hard to resign the life He has made so full of sweetness, which He has given me capacity to enjoy; and I am so young—so young!"

She clasped her fingers passionately upon her brow, as if to still its throbbings.

"This will never do!" said the nurse's eye and finger to Cora, unseen by the sick girl.

Cora knelt down by Constance's chair, and drew her head to her shoulder. "My dearest friend, you cause yourself needless anxiety, and us exquisite pain. You will live to see how uncalled for is all this borrowed trouble. We cannot let you go yet. You are alone in your imagination that you will be compelled to leave us soon. The spring will restore hope and health together."

"Did the Doctor authorize you to say so to me?" inquired Constance. "You speak very positively. Have you his warrant for your prediction? You were talking of me, were you not? I watched you both, as I sat here, and told Ellen that I should entreat you to repeat every syllable he said."

It would have been a hard trial to one of less acute sensibilities and sterner principles than our poor Cora to see that face, so lovely in the eagerness of reviving hopes, and reflect upon the sentence that had gone forth against the "sweet" life to which she clung. It was no

occasion for even slight marvel that she succumbed to the temptation.

"What an egotistical little creature you are!" she said, with a laugh that sounded like genuine heart-music. "Dr. Merrill commented upon the weather and my blooming cheeks—for he is often gallant, after his fashion, cross as he is generally—and merely observed, at parting, that you were low-spirited this afternoon, inclined to be hypochondriacal, and that I must cheer you up."

"But you must have asked him how I was," persisted Constance, not satisfied.

"I did, and I forget the precise 'syllables' of his reply. The substance of it was that you were 'no worse,' or 'well enough, if she would only think so,' or something else as amiably complimentary, so well as I remember."

"He did not intimate that I was dying, then?"

A cold hand, like that of death itself, struck upon Cora's soul, but superhuman power—from what source?—was granted her to answer steadily, cheerfully, desperately: "So far from that, he said that you were getting along slowly, but well, and alluded to your recovery as a matter of course."

When the sisters-in-law expectant left the invalid, she was comfortable in body, and manifested more liveliness of spirit than she had shown since an early stage of her sickness. Cora's conscience, seduced from its fidelity by her repeated perversions of good and evil, was basely recreant enough to congratulate her upon a worthy deed performed in the face of difficulties that would have daunted a less courageous spirit.

Early on the ensuing morning, a messenger came from Mrs. Remer to beg for Mrs. Manning's presence and sympathy in her sore bereavement. Constance had died at daybreak! When Cora could endure to listen, she heard how peaceful was her departure; how quietly and unconsciously the gentle spirit left the beautiful clay tenantless; learned of her affectionate and grateful mention of the beloved friend who had put to flight her presentiment that the dark-browed king of terrors was, even then, standing at her side. "Cora's visit has been an actual blessing to me, mamma. My dreams will be happy ones to-night, I know," she said, before committing herself to sleep. Her awakening was among the angels.

If these tender recollections of the lost one assuaged the bitterness of Cora's grief, her outward bearing was a false index to her inner emotions. For days and weeks, she labored under an extremity of depression, as foreign to

her nature as it was obstinate in its resistance to the efforts employed to relieve it.

"Constance's death was a fearful shock," said the Mannings and the majority of their acquaintances; but there were not wanting those who put another interpretation upon the gloom that shadowed a face but lately all beaming with health and pleasure.

"Cora is sadly altered," said the indefatigable Miss Healy, at an evening party. "She was invited here to-night, but sent a regret, so Miss Williams tells me. Some will have it that she is mourning over poor, dear Constance Remer's death, who was no more to her than to many of the rest of us. I guess there are other reasons why she should not feel particularly gay just now, and especially why she should not care to be here this evening."

Her emphasis and knowing shrug brought the wished-for request for enlightenment on the part of her auditory.

"I do not know whether it is exactly fair to repeat the story in Mr. Miller's presence," simpered the mischief-maker, rolling her eyes affectually at Horace, who stood near.

"That scruple can be easily overcome; I will retire out of hearing," he said, as indifferently as he could.

"No, please don't!" and the lady involuntarily (?) grasped his arm. "You would go off, thinking me an ill-natured, ill-mannered tale-bearer. I have nothing disreputable to relate."

"I hope not, indeed!" Horace could not help saying.

She paid no notice to the interruption. "Nothing that you may not have heard fifty times over. I should not wonder if you were better posted up on this subject than any other person alive. It is altogether proper and likely that you should have had a version of the romance from head-quarters. Did Cora never confide to you the story of her youthful folly—her engagement to Fred Williams, nephew to our host?"

"I am now first made acquainted with the existence of that highly distinguished personage," said Horace, coolly contemptuous.

"Hush-sh-sh! There he is! He lives now in B—, but is spending a few days with his uncle. This is why I understood so quickly the source of Cora's low spirits, which disqualified her from joining our number. 'Auld lang syne' cannot be so soon forgotten. Do not be uneasy, Mr. Miller; yours is not an isolated case. You recollect the song: 'On revient toujours à ses premiers amours.' I dare say it is nothing more than the thought of her sufferings

in the past, on his account, that indisposes Cora to meet her old flame. It went very hard with her, when her father, at Mrs. Barrett's instigation, broke off the match. For years, there was a coolness, nearly amounting to a decided rupture, between 'Aunt Janet' and her *protégée*."

"Was there a regular engagement?" asked some one.

"Fast and firm, my dear sir! She denied it, but not as positively as she does now, that there ever have been any pledges, mutual vows, etc., between herself and another individual whom I could name, but, dear me! everybody fibs about these things. You ought to have seen 'Aunt Janet's' look of solemn reproof when her niece's pretty mouth took oath by all the saints in the calendar, and by some who are not, for she protested upon her own word of honor, as a lady, that Mr. Nameless-just-now was no more engaged to her than she was to the man in the moon. I wanted to burst out laughing in both their faces."

Too much disgusted and annoyed to listen longer, Horace turned his back upon the scandal-monger, and began a conversation with his nearest neighbor; but Miss Healy had sufficient wit to see that her shaft, rough and coarse as it was, had found a joint in the harness. Her sly smile was truly feline, when she remarked his closer inspection of the junior Williams, and the curl of the lip which concluded it. She had her reasons for disliking young Miller, and would have gone to greater pains to torment him than the retailing of this one item of gossip cost her. It was unlike him to narrate the circumstance to his betrothed, confidently as Miss Healy had calculated upon this action. He was ashamed of it the instant the recital escaped him; angry with his thoughtlessness, when Cora's perturbation evinced that her annoyance or surprise surpassed his. She even trembled and grew pale with the unsuccessful attempt to reply to his story.

"You will call me a jealous fool!" said Horace. "Foolish I am to cause you uneasiness about the contemptible business, but it is not jealousy that irritates me, as I recall the tattler's accusation. I wish she were a man. How I should delight to horsewhip the one who dared to couple your name with that of the coxcomb, the brainless puppy, who did nothing but pull his dust-colored moustache and draw! 'Ah-h, indeed!' 'Ya-as!' 'No-ow, re-al-ly!' the whole evening! I forget! This is a serious matter—sport to me, it was once almost death to you. It is 'altogether proper' that I should enact father confessor, and possess myself of the 'romance,'

from preface to 'Finis.' How old were you when you surrendered your heart, without firing a shot, at the siege of this invincible Adonis? What a flint your father must have been to condemn you to inconsolable misery by his refusal to sanction so congenial a union! What filial piety you have exhibited in not hating him and Aunt Janet forever and a day!"

Instead of replying to his raillery, she burst into tears. The bewildered Horace wondered, apologized, and coaxed by turns.

"Only tell me how I have offended!" he begged. "You could not have conceived the idea that I was in earnest in aught that I have said. I never imagined that you would regard Miss Healy's fabrications more than I do—than every one does—as beneath the contempt of decent, sensible people."

Cora wept on in silence, only signifying by a gesture that he was not in fault. Completely baffled, Horace had to await the subsiding of the flood. As her face cleared, his darkened. An unwelcome fancy had crossed his brain.

"Dearest," he said, tenderly, yet so gravely that she shook with alarm, "I do not seek to know the fount of the tears which have astonished as much as they have distressed me. Answer me a single question, and we will let the unlucky topic rest. Was there one iota of truth in all that Miss Healy reported? Was this man ever an intimate acquaintance—a suitor of yours?"

"Never!" murmured the frightened girl.

"Was there ever an attachment on either side?" pursued Horace.

"None that I knew of," was the response.

"I am content!" and he withdrew her hands from the tear-stained cheeks. "My little darling, you are weak and nervous, and are scared by shadows. Pardon me for teasing you so pertinaciously. Seriously, if you had fancied yourself in love fifty times in your girlhood, I should not care, provided you confessed it to me. The history of ten engagements, and as many broken hearts on your part, even were all the honored swains Fred Williamses, would not arouse the pang I should experience at one partial or distorted confidence. I am pleased, though, that you never cared for the fellow, else I might feel less flattered by your unaccountable acceptance of your humble servant."

"You were never more welcome!" cried Ellen Miller, as Cora dropped in for an afternoon call. "I have an agreeable surprise in reserve for you. Come into the back parlor. There is something there you will be overjoyed to see."

Full of expectant pleasure, Cora followed her. A lady arose at their entrance, but there ensued no such scene as Ellen had pictured to herself. The telltale blood dyed Cora's temples with shame and embarrassment, whilst the stranger remained quietly standing, without any token whatever of recognition.

"Is it possible that you have forgotten Mary Chester?" said Ellen. "And you, Mary, do you not recognize an old friend in Cora Manning! What fickle hearts or short memories you two must have!"

"Forgive me, Miss Manning," returned Miss Chester, extending her hand in graceful salutation. "I did not remember your name for a moment, familiar as your features seemed to me. Have we met before, and where?"

"In B——. My aunt, Mrs. Barrett, is a resident of that place," Cora continued to say, she never knew how.

"I have the pleasure of a slight acquaintance with Mrs. Barrett," said Miss Chester, charitably intent upon removing the confusion of the other. "If I had known that she had a relative here, I should have done myself the honor of a farewell call, and inquired if she had any message or letters for you. Have you heard from her recently?"

"She has been with us for several weeks," was Cora's reluctant answer, for Ellen's eloquent countenance bespoke amazement at this singular proof of the "extreme intimacy" of Mrs. Barrett and the family whose "grounds adjoined" hers.

"You have visited her occasionally, I suppose?" resumed Miss Chester. "How careless in me not to recall the circumstances of our former introduction! I am not usually so forgetful. I must request your forbearance, promising never again to be guilty of a similar fault towards you."

Her scrutiny, earnest and puzzled, engaged that she would keep her word. The visit passed off stiffly, affable as she endeavored to be. She felt that there was a mistake, not her own, yet that continued inquiry would be unpleasant. Ellen was not less perplexed, and more troubled; while Cora's chagrin defied description. She took advantage of the earliest opportunity of ending the embarrassing scene, and walked hurriedly homewards, execrating her folly and the unpropitious fate that had enabled the Chesters to keep an engagement so long postponed. There were more sickening misgivings mingled with her discomfiture.

"What will Ellen think? She will tell Horace! What will he do? *What can I say?*"

The straight road of honest, penitent confession was the last she meditated taking. The web of her own inconsiderate weaving was about her, choking, blinding, crippling her at every turn, and she planned escape by plunging deeper into its intricate windings. Culpable as was her confirmed habit of misrepresentation, lax as her morals had become through long indulgence in prevarication, she had seldom, if ever, manufactured and uttered a deliberate lie, such as she laid away in her heart, ready for her betrothed's hearing and belief against his next coming.

She met him with trepidation, and one glimpse of his features assured her that something weighed upon his spirits. There was a single flash of light—the fond beam that always greeted her—then the cloud again usurped the place of the "clear shining." It was an unspeakable relief to the guilty heart when the cause of his sadness was announced. The speculation of which we have treated upon a former page, as having excited his friends' fears, and, in some degree, his apprehensions, had been unfortunate. He was likely to lose heavily by it—how heavily he could not as yet determine; it might eventuate in a total wreck of fortune. Like the strong-hearted man and Christian he was, he indulged in no useless murmurs at fate, or cowardly misgivings at what the future might have in reserve to tax his fortitude and strength. Already he was devising expedients by which he might retrieve his failure, if failure it should prove to be. Against all reverses he was prepared to struggle bravely, except the delay of the union wherein were centred his best and proudest hopes. They might be obliged to live more plainly than he had anticipated, he stated to his ladylove, but, if the worst should befall him, he would still be able to offer her a comfortable home, and together they would wait patiently for the dawn of more prosperous days. All that was noble in Cora's nature was drawn forth by this appeal. She hastened to disabuse Horace's mind of every apprehension of reluctance on her side to fulfil their contract, or repugnance to entering the humble dwelling he had described as her probable abode for years to come. Her regrets were all for him and his disappointment. In her cheerful constancy, her self-forgetful love, he found compensation both for disappointment and the suspense which was yet more harrowing.

Mr. Manning interrupted the dialogue. He, too, was full of sympathy, and was not quite superior to the temptation to repeat his prog-

nostications of this very result. "I wanted to caution you, my boy," he said, shaking his head sagely, "but young people are apt to consider us old fogies as a set of bilious croakers, and regard our advice accordingly. Cora here can testify, as can my wife and sister, that I foresaw this evil from the start. And sharply was I taken to task for my opinion, I assure you"—nodding at his daughter. "I won't repeat the womanly arguments that hailed about my ears until I was glad to hold my peace."

"Had you addressed your dissuasions to me, sir, my course might have been very different," replied Horace, with a searching glance at Cora. "I acted upon the impression that I had your cordial approval of my venture, and this mistake led me to greater lengths than I originally purposed."

"It was a mistake, and a singular one," said Mr. Manning. "Why, Cora, you—where has the child gone? I was about to say that she could have set you right on that head. There is no use in lamenting over what is done and cannot be remedied. I am an intruder here, to-night, to say to you, my dear fellow, that my confidence in you remains unshaken—that I have not even the charge of imprudence to bring against you. You were a little precipitate, but that is of no consequence. Men of twice your years and experience commit greater blunders, are guilty of greater rashness every day." Here the old gentleman began to stammer and look embarrassed. "And furthermore, Horace, if you do not get well out of this quagmire, if all that you have goes by the board, I stand ready and able to help you to regain your place—an honorable one it is, too—in the mercantile world. Moreover"—hesitating yet more woefully—"don't make yourself wretched—that is, unhappy; I mean uncomfortable—with fancying any alteration in certain arrangements. You understand? I commenced life—my married life, ahem?—when I was pretty near the foot of the ladder. It's by far the best way."

This was a long speech for worthy Mr. Manning, yet Horace had no language, at its close, with which to thank him. Deeply affected, he wrung his hand, and his moistened eye and quivering lip told of gratitude too great to be articulate.

When Cora re-entered the room, he was alone and more composed. Into her ear he poured his acknowledgments to and praises of her father.

"But how strangely you misconceived his sentiments touching this luckless business!" he remarked, presently. "They appear to

have been exactly the reverse of what you understood. How do you account for this?"

"Either I was dull or so perverse in my ideas of the subject that I did not and would not comprehend, or he is forgetful," answered Cora, readily.

And this was the woman who, not two months previous, had avowed so proudly, "To him, at least, I am no dissembler!" The broad, shallow steps of harmless evasion, unimportant exaggeration, and pardonable equivocation had prepared her slowly, but how surely, for sudden and deeper plunges into falsehood. The Father of lies appreciated his tool, and was master of his art. Horace had not the meagre satisfaction of knowing how full and remorseful was her participation in the trial of feeling and threatening of pecuniary loss that oppressed him. He saw that she suffered, and from some cause beyond his power to cure; and this begot in him additional care at a season when his uneasiness was already sufficient to crush the spirits and energy of an ordinary man.

While matters were in this state, he had a call from Dr. Merrill. This devoted man of medicine rarely stepped aside from the routine of professional life, unless incited to the extraordinary measure by business of an urgent nature. Upon this occasion, before seating himself, he broached the subject of his errand. Horace's amazement was profound when the theme was prefaced by his sister's name, and it grew apace when he discovered that a serious complaint was entered and sustained against one whom he had ever regarded as a model of discretion. But, as the recital proceeded, he perceived, from his prior knowledge of the circumstances, that, if she had spoken more freely than was altogether consistent with prudence, she had said nothing unadvisedly. The Doctor's charge was to this effect: that Miss Miller had stated and reiterated publicly, as a fact, his ignorance of Constance Remer's danger, when every labored breath was throwing out the death-dew upon her brow; had reassured her friends, and, through them, the doomed patient, when they expressed solicitude at the result of her sickness; had allowed her to pass into the eternal world unwarned, and without the last mournful privilege of saying "Farewell" to those who would always lament her silent departure.

"Now, sir," concluded the irate physician, "I never said that the girl would probably recover. I have not practised medicine—with some indifferent skill, as even my enemies grant—for twenty-five years, not to know con-

sumption when I have it to deal with, hydra-headed though it be. I gave up all hope of the case in point before I had paid half a dozen visits at Mr. Remer's. You do not require to be told how far short I should have fallen of my duty, if I had openly proclaimed my conviction, and advised the parents not to waste more money, physie, and pains upon their idol. Until the world is as wise as doctors, we must work on, with what semblance of confidence we can assume, while the vital spark quivers in the body. But do you not see in what a light people will eye the physician who is as much the dupe of appearances as they are themselves? It is a mortal sin in him to mistake the slightest symptom. He ought to foresee the end from the beginning, in the most complicated malady. Is he not paid to do it? I never exchanged a syllable with your sister upon the subject of the deceased's illness, nor do I guess who was her authority for the statement she has circulated of my judgment in the case. There was one who could have told her a totally different story, and the evidence of this person I am prepared to adduce at any moment. The afternoon preceding Miss Remer's death, I imparted my impressions—my certainty, rather—of her actual condition to Miss Cora Manning—"

"To whom?" exclaimed Horace, starting from his seat. "I beg your pardon! Did you say Miss Manning?"

"I did. Chancing to encounter her on my way home, after the last visit I made Constance's sick chamber, I answered her inquiries as to her friend's health in the most candid style I could command; told her, in so many words, that she was near her end; that it would not surprise me if she did not live through the night. She was shocked, of course, so visibly overcome that I had to warn her against betraying her alarm to its object, pointing out the evil effects of such a useless revelation at that late hour. She acquiesced in my prudent suggestion, and I left her at Mr. Remer's door. It is impossible that she should have forgotten the substance of our conversation. If you demand her evidence, I trust that she is enough my friend to afford it, at my request."

"It is unnecessary—quite superfluous," rejoined Horace, hastily. "I have heard all I want, and more."

Commanding himself by a strenuous effort, he pledged his word for the contradiction, and, if practicable, the suppression of a report so detrimental to the Doctor's professional pride and interests, and they parted amicably.

The wave that tears the breach in the dyke prepares the way for the surge of its mightier and more disastrous successor. Horace still sat over his neglected ledger, his head resting upon his hands, buried in the painful train of thought forced upon him by Dr. Merrill's communication, when a letter was brought to him. As he broke the seal mechanically, another missive fell from within it. He read the first. Gossips are proverbially thick-skinned, or magnanimously indifferent to the prickles they rub against in their quest after the truth, which, we may remark, in passing, is seldom "the whole truth," and still more rarely "nothing but the truth." Miss Healy's sensitive spirit made her an exception to the general law of imperturbability. She "had her feelings," she was fond of saying. Those who were acquainted with her idiosyncrasies hinted that she had her spites also, and that this class of emotions often reached a pitch of virulence and obstinacy exceedingly unbecoming in so public-spirited an individual, the pretended dispassionate benefactress of the community blessed in being her abiding-place. Horace had fairly earned a share in her rancorous recollection. Stung to the quick by his open disdain for her, as exhibited at divers times and in sundry places, especially and most offensively at Mrs. Williams' *soirée*, the aggrieved spinster had sought through her well-supplied arsenal for an instrument of torture that might suitably avenge her for the indignity offered. His love for his betrothed was his most vulnerable point, and this chimed in well with her inclination, for Cora, albeit several degrees less obnoxious than her lover, was by no means a favorite with this fastidious lady. In Fred Williams she found a not unwilling accessory to her plot of humbling both the haughty Horace and her who had, to the gentleman's notion, displayed inexcusably degenerate taste in receiving the devotion of his rival. The *ci-devant* beau had, fortunately for the success of their machinations, preserved one memento of the juvenile engagement which, the reader may not be astonished to learn, had once existed between himself and Cora Manning. This souvenir, whether accidentally overlooked in the return of letters at Mr. Manning's command, or withheld purposely, was evidence unimpeachable of the fact and the character of said connection. It was nothing less than a letter penned in Cora's own hand, addressed to her boy-gallant, and glowing with all the inconsiderate ardor of a love-lorn maiden in her sixteenth year.

This was the effusion which Horace Miller's burning gaze now scanned; its every line branding with the grossest deceit and direct mendacity the being he had worshipped as near akin to angelic natures. Galling as its phrases of undisguised tenderness were to his proud, delicate spirit, this was as nothing in comparison with the blighting conviction that his idol was the basest clay—one for whom his pity must be mingled with contempt.

"If she had but told me! if she had owned the truth, were it a thousand times more humiliating, I would have loved her all the same," he groaned to his sister, that night; "I said this to her when I made inquiry about this early folly—for it was only a folly, Ellen—the fanciful dream of a sentimental school-girl. The whole sin was in its concealment, in the premeditated deception of him who hid nothing from her. I have not deserved this at her hands."

Ellen was much moved, but less surprised than her brother; the scales had not fallen so suddenly from her eyes. Feeling that all might as well be told; that the wisest and most merciful policy towards the sufferer was to complete his disenchantment by abundance of testimony, she related her story. To her, the scene in which Cora and Mary Chester had acted such different parts was but the commencement of similar developments, the key to incidents hitherto inexplicable, each illustrative of this heinous defect in the disposition and conduct of the misguided girl.

And thus Cora Manning lost lover and friend, gaining in their place a memory replete with wretchedness and shame unavailing; the blind commiseration of those cognizant of the punishment, and not the sin; the displeasure and distrust of the few whose esteem she most valued; the lasting reprobation of him concerning whom, and in whose behalf, she had sacrificed more of truth than for any other cause or creature besides. For was it not to screen their loves from the profanation of vulgar remark, that the lie of policy slipped from her tongue ere she was alive to its formation in thought? that she might shine brighter, stand higher in the respect of him and his, was not the tinsel lie of vanity paraded? to spare him a feather's weight of vexation, an atom of added care, had not the lie of affection been earnest and repeated? to escape his anger, to retain his love, was the lie of fright a whit less plausible and convincing than the rest? Truly, her labors had been neither few nor small, and here was their reward! The fly in the ointment had fulfilled its mission, and the once exulting possessor of the precious casket flung it from him with sorrowful loathing.

Would that the tale were all fiction, or that it treated of the only golden phial thus polluted into a rank offence to those who, in this age of gaudy coloring and intense refraction, still cherish, as one of the holiest of sentiments, a genuine Heaven-commanded love of TRUTH, for itself and as it is.

LILLIAN'S MASQUERADING.

BY MRS: FRANCES FULLER BARRITT.

CHAPTER I.

"The keenest pangs the wretched find
Are rapture to the dreary void,
The leafless desert of the mind,
The waste of feelings unemployed."

LILLIAN WHYTE, pacing listlessly back and forth in her luxurious dressing-room, seemed ill at ease. With eyes upturned, as if to avoid resting upon the elegant appointments profusely strewn about her, and nervously twisting and twining the fair hands together in every possible gesture of impatience, while murmuring, half sadly and half earnestly, some couplets from the "Psalm of Life," she had more the air of a prisoner in, than the independent mistress of, the stately brown-stone mansion whereof this spacious dressing-room was but the merest fraction, either for size or elegance. Garments of deep mourning assisted the impression of sorrowful restraint, and, but that her countenance indicated more the vehemence of unrest than the agitation of a real sorrow, her demeanor might have been mistaken for the disconsolateness of late bereavement. But the listless walk and the occasional stamp of the slippered foot, which one might see, but not hear, in that velvet-lined chamber, the contraction of the broad, fair, girlish brow, and the clasp and unclasp of the never-resting hands, gave another character to her disquiet, whatever it was.

"I wonder if what the poets say of life be true," she mused, stopping by the window to pluck a geranium-leaf.

As the light fell more upon her face and figure, it revealed a singular combination of

childlikeness and serious thought. It was the youthfulness and purity, however, that were infantile; the gravity of the eyes, the extraordinary breadth of forehead, from which the chestnut-brown hair was smoothly combed away, the rather pale complexion of the regular features, all gave that air commonly called "interesting" to a face which, had it been more rosy, might have been called beautiful, and dignity to a form too slight and delicate to be in the least stately or commanding of itself.

"Life is earnest, life is real, and the grave is *not* our goal," murmured Lillian, resuming her walk. "To me, life has been a dream, and I have never had one purpose in it of more than a moment's consideration. I am thoroughly weary of my life—no, perhaps I ought to say of myself, because, truly, I know little enough of life, except as a child in my mother's house, and subsequently as mistress of this great, solitary one, where no one ever came except Mr. Whyte. From what one learns in books, I ought to be quite a heroine to have been two years a wife, and a widow at eighteen, and the heiress of great wealth. A little beauty, too, I should have, to be a heroine; that, however, I shall have to imagine." Pausing before a large mirror, Lillian gave a half earnest, half mirthful survey of her person, as if to decide how much claim she had to the attribute of beauty. "Small, pale, neither ugly nor handsome, eyes of hazel, head rather too large for my body. It certainly was not for my comeliness that Mr. Whyte married me! How strange that I should be a widow! I look like an unformed school-

girl, and that is just what I am, only that, in the midst of my school-days, my mother gave me up, to be this incomplete woman that I appear, the wife of a strange old man, and now his widow and heiress. Alone in the world at eighteen! Inexperienced, I know not what to do with my fortune, though that, I suppose, is safely invested and taken care of by Mr. Whyte's attorney. The worst of all is that I know not what to do with *myself*. Six months of widowhood in this lonely house, with only the society of books, has been a dreary time, indeed. Oh, my mother, if, to have me the mistress of all this luxury, you yielded up my girlhood to the companionship of age, why did you not live to find enjoyment in it? For you, who denied yourself so much for me, I might have found pleasure in my bondage; but, dying, you left me to a life of cold and loveless duty; and, by another death, I am made free, yet in bonds, for is not this pulseless existence, requiring no thought or action of my own, the most intolerable slavery? I have no friendships, no loves, no duties. I am shut up, as in prison, from all that makes the lives of others pleasurable. I am not able to perform a common charity, so lifted out of the tide of humanity am I by my loneliness, my ignorance, and my wealth. From books I learn that there is sin, cruelty, suffering, and grief in all ranks of society, but none like mine. I must know what life is. How shall I find it out? Where shall I go to take lessons?"

Lillian's earnest discourse with herself was interrupted at this moment by a servant, who announced that the girl engaged to do sewing was waiting for orders in the back parlor.

"Send her to me," was the almost eager command, as the thought of having her solitude enlivened, even by the presence of a sewing-girl, sent a thrill through the morbidly sensitive nerves of the young widow; and, in the moments that intervened before the coming of this unknown seamstress, she busied herself with trying to imagine what sort of person she might be.

When the door opened, and the sewing-girl stood before her, Lillian arose with a feeling of involuntary respect, and a tinge of embarrassment imparted itself to her manner as she addressed some commonplace observations to her; for there was an air of superiority about the employee that made it seem something like presumption in the employer to introduce the business of the day in the usual careless manner. Not every lady living in a brown-stone mansion would have felt herself compelled to

notice this peculiarity of the seamstress, but Lillian Whyte was, as yet, but a novice in the ways of wealth and fashion, and obeyed a natural impulse naturally. Therefore, after giving her a little time to breathe from her evident fatigue, she very kindly inquired what kind of sewing she would rather have for that day.

"Oh, anything," answered the seamstress, appearing a little surprised.

"The truth is," said Lillian, "that I have not much need of any work; but, fancying that I would be better amused to have something going on in the house, I made some purchases both of linen and dress-goods, and you can commence at which you like best."

"Then I will do the linen first," answered the seamstress, still more surprised at so indulgent a patron.

"You may put as much work on them as you please," continued Lillian, pleasantly. "I shall not mind how long you are making them, so you do not idle away your time," she added, half playfully.

The seamstress glanced up from an examination of the goods, and, catching the mirthful expression of Lillian's smile, smiled brightly in return, without any shade of that wonder which had appeared in her countenance at first. A very comfortable feeling of confidence seemed established henceforth between the rich young widow and the poor young seamstress— young yet, though evidently the senior of Lillian.

"When you get ready to begin with your needle, I will read to you; but first tell me your name," said Lillian.

"My name is Eunice Harvey."

"Miss Harvey or Eunice?"

"Eunice," replied Miss Harvey, while a bright color came into her cheek at this so great condescension.

The little lady, who was watching her, with ready sympathy detected the cause of the heightened color, and added, softly, "And mine is Lillian."

"It is a sweet name," said Eunice, without raising her eyes from her work.

"Yes, Tennyson makes it sweet with his musical rhymes. You remember his

'Airy, fairy Lillian,
Flitting, fairy Lillian?'

But what shall I read to you?"

With far greater delicacy of perception than the daughters of fashion can boast, with all their fine nerves, the youthful, but unspoiled mistress of wealth which most of them might

envy had detected at once in her sewing-girl the evidences of cultivation and refinement, and, with true generosity and Christian kindness, acknowledged their existence as readily and graciously as if they had belonged to the greatest lady in the land. Therefore, she gave Eunice her choice of books or themes, and insisted on knowing what it was.

"Since you will, then, I should like to hear you read 'Rasselas,' because I think I need to be made more contented with my lot."

"Yes, that will be good for both of us," answered Lillian, as she went to fetch the book.

When luncheon was served, the seamstress was not excused from partaking with her patron, who, observing that she was becoming reserved and even melancholy, rallied her on the little benefit received from reading of Rasselas's experience.

"The good which I might have got from the book has been made ineffectual by the reader," replied Eunice, with a dim smile.

"How so?"

"Because, dear Lillian, your kindness and courtesy carry me back in recollection to a time when I was not a sewing-girl as now, but, like yourself, in the possession of ease and elegance, and when to be treated with the refined courtesy you have this day shown me was my right, and not a favor."

"Eunice," said Lillian, a little embarrassed by the red flushes of pride and sensibility on the cheek of the seamstress, "of course, I cannot affect to be ignorant of the distinctions of society, but, in my eyes, you have every right to courtesy you ever had, and to kindness, undoubtedly a far greater right, since now you need it to make up for other losses."

"The other losses would have been nothing, had not that of kindness gone along with them," answered Eunice, tremulously.

"You would smile at my ignorance, Eunice, could you know how little I really know of the world, with which, moreover, I have a great desire to become acquainted. Now, I will make a compact with you; I will read to you in the mornings while you sew for me, and in the afternoons you shall tell me all you know about this naughty bug-bear, the world. I want you to tell me what life is, for really I do not know, and have no possible means of finding out."

Eunice could not forbear a smile, in which there shone a little incredulity, as she answered: "If you have not any possible means, I know not indeed who has."

"Then I know how to use my means, perhaps."

"I will not pretend to doubt this, and yet it is an easy thing to learn."

"Teach me, then!"

"Indeed, I could teach you very little that would benefit you. The learning of the ways of society comes by use alone; and I would not have you go over my experience in order to get the knowledge I possess."

"But I would willingly undertake it."

"More willingly than you would go through it, I opine."

Lillian laughed a light-hearted, girlish laugh, as she answered: "You make a great deal of your superior acquirements; I shall think you are 'taking on airs' with me, if you persevere in refusing my petition."

"No, Mrs. Whyte," spoke Eunice, with much seriousness; "whatever disposition I might once have had for 'taking on airs,' this very knowledge which you covet has quite overcome. There is no better school of humility than that through which the daughter of fashion, suddenly deprived of wealth, must pass; and in that school I have taken my degree."

"Would it be trying yourself too much to relate to me your history?" asked Lillian, gently.

"It would be the best manner of giving you that glimpse of society you seem so much to desire; neither am I inclined to deny myself the pleasure of your sympathy, since I am sure it is genuine; but, if you are wearied before I am done, do not hesitate to interrupt me."

"Go on," urged Lillian, eagerly, her face glowing all over with anticipation.

We leave the new friends to their afternoon talk, and pass on to the results of that suddenly formed intimacy.

CHAPTER II.

THE genial spring sunshine poured into the spacious back parlor of a house on — Avenue, and glinted merrily over many a token of wealth and good taste in the forms of curious furniture and well chosen pictures, as well as in the bindings of costly books, scattered here and there to show mental cultivation and the habit of study. The present occupation of the inmates, however, with one exception, was anything but studious. Sitting upright in her chair of large capacity, was the mother and mistress of the family, her thick, sturdy figure seeming incapable of any other posture, and making one wonder whether she did not sleep perpendicularly. Around this centre-piece of the family group clustered the lighter personages in the

tableau—Miss Angela Knowe, in the horizontal upon a very comfortable sofa, teasing a petulant lap-dog—Mr. Arthur Knowe making, with his elegant figure, an acute angle of which the window-frame was the other side, and holding his fashionable hat as if he had just stepped in to pay his mother a call, only his attention seemed directed in quite a different quarter—another reclining figure being that of an invalid relative of the Knowes, King Granville by name—and last, and we fear we must also say least, the dark figure of a young girl clad in mourning, whose face, half averted, we still recognize as that of Lillian Whyte. She is bending over her embroidery, apparently quite intent on accomplishing a great deal on this particular morning.

"Miss White," drawled out Angela, after the fatigue of an argument with her mother about the propriety of allowing her old-fashioned father to accompany them to the Springs—"Miss White, bring your work to me that I may look at it."

"Permit me," interposed Arthur Knowe, taking the embroidery from Lillian's hands, at the same time glancing into her eyes a quick, expressive look. "My sister is so delicate," he continued, mischievously, "it gives me the highest gratification to be of service to her." And, bending over Angela's couch, he awaited with gravity her examination of the work.

"Your work is beautiful, Miss White," she said, at last; "but you are very slow with it."

"No wonder, I should say," put in Arthur, "for this is the third time this morning, to my knowledge, that you have interrupted Miss White to look at her work; this time, however, she has not her silks to rearrange"—returning the embroidery to Lillian with a bow.

"You are very attentive, Arthur," sneered Angela; "I shall soon hear that you have taken the arrangement of her silks upon yourself, also. I did not know that young gentlemen numbered embroidery among their accomplishments—or sewing-girls among their objects of attention," she added in a lower tone, but loud enough for Lillian to hear.

The painful blush which burned on Lillian's cheek was reflected in the angry one that crimsoned Arthur's face as he retorted: "My sister has many things to learn yet, and, among them, ladylike deportment."

"Arthur!" angrily cried his mother, turning her head sharply round, as if its connection with her stout and upright person was by a pivot, "where have you learned to address such compliments to your sister?"

"I beg your pardon, mother, and yours, Angela; but, hereafter, forbear meddling with my peculiarities if you would not surprise me into rudeness." Saying which, the young man stalked loftily from the room, and, not long after, Mrs. Knowe and her daughter were summoned to receive morning calls. Rising languidly, and shaking out the folds of her elegant *negligé*, Angela approached the lounge upon which reclined King Granville, apparently unobservant of all about him, and, as she secretly thought, provokingly indifferent, and, bending gracefully beside him, inquired very tenderly after his health, adding, "You know, Cousin King, I should not leave you in solitude, did not the duties of society require so much of my time. When you are a little better, I shall hope to have your assistance in entertaining all these tiresome people, shall I not?" she asked coquettishly, at the same time affecting to look for a fault in the exquisite satin slipper that encased her really pretty foot.

Her cousin smiled, glanced at the slipper and the pretty embroidery accidentally revealed by the elevation of the foot it contained to the edge of an ottoman, thanked her for her inquiries, and relapsed into his usual reserve.

And so it happened that Lillian Whyte and King Granville were left alone together. The hot and painful blush of wounded feeling had not subsided on Lillian's cheek when he directed his eyes upon her; feeling a little curiosity to know in what spirit the sewing-girl received Angela's interference in the gallantries bestowed upon her by Arthur. He had never before taken any notice of Lillian, though it often happened that he was lounging for hours in the back parlor. As he looked at her this morning, he was conscious of being interested in the delicate, childlike little person who so ceaselessly pursued her embroidery day after day in his presence, without ever raising her eyes from the work before her. He wondered if she enjoyed this stitching flowers into silk from morning till night without ever having time to look through the glass doors of the conservatory at the real living flowers growing there. He decided in his mind that she was quite pretty and intelligent-looking, and he was not surprised at Arthur's liking to take a little time to admire her in the mornings. She had a beautiful bloom for a sewing-girl—he had always thought they were pale. And he amused himself fancying how this quiet little girl, that looked as ladylike as possible, would appear, could she be presented to him as a full-blown belle of fashion, like his Cousin Angela. She looked

like a lady in her present position, he wondered if she would look like a sewing-girl in that ; the metamorphoses made by dress are so singular ! A book that had lain under the pillow of his lounge dropped upon the floor. It was but a slight sound, yet, so profound had been the silence, that Lillian started as if just awakened, and looked nervously in the direction of the lounge. Unconsciously, she sighed, and resumed her stitching with an air of weariness ; yet, seeing that the book remained unrecovered on the floor, and thinking perhaps the invalid could not reach it, she put down her work and went to give it to him.

"Thank you, Miss White ; I could have spared you this trouble, had I foreseen your intention ; but, since you have relinquished your embroidery for a moment, let me recommend you to take a turn in the conservatory, to rest your eyes and fingers. You will find my aunt has a choice collection of flowers that are well worth looking at."

"I cannot doubt it," answered Lillian, pleasantly, her face reflecting his kindly smile, "but these inodorous flowers that I am making demand my time to-day."

"Or, rather, my Cousin Angela demands it!" said Granville.

"It is all the same, she or her flowers," replied Lillian, "when our bread depends upon our labor or skill."

"And does your bread depend upon this interminable stitching? Pardon me, Miss White"—seeing that Lillian blushed and hesitated ; "I did not mean to be impertinent, but I was thinking of a dear friend of mine, who, for aught I know to the contrary, may be earning her bread in the same way, and she was not used to it. Poor Eunice !"

"Eunice!" repeated Lillian, her face suddenly taking on a joyous glow that really made her beautiful. "Was her name Eunice Harvey?"

"Do you know her? Can you tell me where she is?" cried Granville, starting up violently, and gazing wildly at Lillian. "I beg of you, Miss White, to tell me what you know of her!" he added, sinking back and growing deathly pale.

Lillian ran to him, fearing he had fainted, and perceived, to her horror, that a little thread of light red blood was oozing from his lips. Flying to the bell, she rang it clamorously, and, not knowing what else to do, commenced wiping his lips with her handkerchief. Thus summoned, it was not long before servants appeared, and after them Angela and her mother, the former shivering with terror, and the latter

giving orders in her sturdy, upright way. Angela's terror was not so great but that she perceived the tender solicitude of Lillian's looks and actions, and was made indignant thereby. "Get to your work, Miss White," said she ; "I will attend my cousin." And, having dismissed Lillian, was soon in her turn dismissed by the physician, who forbade such a press of attendance.

As soon as the hemorrhage was checked, Granville was removed to the quiet of his own apartment, and, the family dispersing, Lillian was left to ponder the events of the morning in solitude, the more grateful that she really needed to have time to reflect upon the discovery she had made, and the best manner of reuniting the broken links of this *affaire de cœur*, which interested her so warmly. Many a time, since she had undertaken this part of her "education," as she called it, had she shrunk, half dismayed, from the unpleasantness of her self-imposed lessons. Even to her, who had the secret refuge of a home and means for every want, and who could be inwardly amused at her outward humility, and by imagining the consternation of these man-mongers, could they know the truth—even to her, the experiences of the last month had been almost unbearable ; and she often found herself wondering how Eunice Harvey, who was of so lofty a nature, and had so much more to endure, had borne it all and lived. After the little passage of this morning, she had inwardly resolved to break off from her present studies, and return to the more pleasant, if more solitary one of books. But now ! Should she withdraw herself just at this juncture, when it seemed that she might be the means of restoring happiness, and perhaps luxury, to the heart and home of Eunice Harvey ?

While she was pondering, a step beside her chair startled her from her abstraction, and, glancing up, she beheld Arthur Knowe, his cheeks glowing and his eyes burning. His black curling hair was damp with moisture from his brow, and a strange expression of mingled mirth and moodiness curled into a smile of firm disdain his handsome mouth. Without apology, he drew a footstool beside her, and sat down where he could look in her face. Seeing upon the floor her handkerchief stained with blood, he snatched it up hastily, looked in the corners for the name, then cast it back again impatiently. "Lillian ! a proper name for the owner." Then, after a moment of silence, during which he was closely regard-

ing her, and during which, too, she had greatly lost her composure—"Lillian, I have just come from being lectured by my paragon of a sister; and who, do you guess, was the bone of contention between us?"

"Myself, I have no doubt," answered Lillian, with a sudden courage.

"You are quick of apprehension. Perhaps you can guess as readily what she said?"

"I shall not attempt that."

"Then I shall tell you."

"It is unnecessary; I should not like to hear."

Lillian's tone had a degree of hauteur that surprised herself; still, the needle would go amiss and prick her finger. She had recourse to the rejected cambric to stanch the tiny wound.

"Your blood and his," said Arthur, gloomily.

"Shall I tell you what my sister fears about this King Granville? She says you have bewitched him; and she says, moreover, that you have bewitched me."

"Why does your sister say I have bewitched Mr. Granville?" asked Lillian, appearing not to have heard the latter accusation.

"Because, since this attack, he has asked for you a number of times, and seems to desire your presence; and because, she says, you showed such solicitude for him when the hemorrhage came on."

He was looking intently in her face with his glowing eyes, and truly she had grown pale again.

"Let me go to him, then," she said, half rising. "I must see him, indeed, if he wishes it. Why should your sister detain me?"

"Sit down, Miss White; you cannot go to him now, for he is sleeping, and the doctor has ordered that he see no one for a day or two, except his nurse."

"Then, at the earliest time of safety, I must not be denied, indeed I must not; there is much depending on it," urged Lillian, seriously.

"What is this cousin of ours to you, Lillian White? A lover? He can bear no other relation to you that I can see! Are you, indeed, what my sister says—a flirt? She said more than that."

"You take great pains to have me understand your sister's opinion of me, Mr. Knowe. Have I not said I did not wish to hear it? Will you go away, and leave me to the only duty I have in this house—that of embellishing your idle sister's beauty? I am not paid, Mr. Knowe, for listening to accusations or insults. I will thank you to leave me to myself."

Arthur arose, as if to obey, but began pacing

back and forth through the room. The angry color had faded out from his cheeks, and an expression of doubt clouded his before animated countenance. Approaching Lillian once more, he bent over her chair, and whispered: "Make your own conditions, I care not how extravagant. I love you; you shall love me. That odious cousin must be left to Angela; she dotes on him, stupid as he is. But I am—bewitched, as Angela says; and I shall stop at nothing. Say, Lillian, when will you be *mine*?"

Lillian might have sat to a sculptor for a statue of amazement; but, as the full meaning of what had been said gradually dawned upon her comprehension, the woman-nature, outraged and indignant, sprang up to assert itself. Rising with dignity, she waved him back. "Do not expect an answer," she said, calmly. "Words are inadequate to express my scorn of you." And, passing him, rooted to the spot with mortification, she was proceeding to leave the apartment, when he sprang after her, and caught her hand to drag her back.

"Shall I call the servants?" asked Lillian, coldly.

"No, for God's sake, give me a moment! I am sorry—I am more humbled and distressed than you can believe at my accursed folly. I would not have said it, I would have told you how I loved you—for I do love you madly—but those women, with their notions of propriety, put every improper thing into our heads. I would have asked you to be my wife; I *do* ask you now, and my mother and Angela, and all their insipid friends may say just what they please, if you do not reject me. Will you not pardon me, Lillian? I was crazy; I was, to repeat Angela's word, bewitched."

Lillian had withdrawn her hand, and stood quietly watching his eager, questioning face, without a sign of emotion visible in her own. It was wonderful how stately she had grown in this one day.

"You will not pardon me, then? You are forever offended with me? Oh, do not say that, for, if I have but the slightest hope of gaining your love, you shall see how I repent of the offence."

"As far as I am concerned," was the grave reply, "I can easily pardon you, for you have had no power to injure me; *but for the principle I have no forgiveness, now or ever.* May all who assail youth, and helplessness, and need, in this heartless manner, receive the scorn and punishment they deserve!" And, gliding hurriedly from the room, Lillian sought to keep up her courage by hasty preparations to leave the

house; but, firm as she felt she was, the pent-up emotions of her bosom would burst forth, then and there, and, leaning on the banister, she gave way to passionate sobbing.

"If you see that I really repent, in dust and ashes, Lillian?" spoke a troubled voice at her side. "If you can know this?" But, with an impetuosity of which she was immediately afterwards ashamed, as betraying her agitation, she rushed into the street.

"How foolish I was," she said to herself, "to put myself in the way of such things, when there was no necessity! Yet why should I complain? It was to know life as it really is, in its deformity as well as its beauty, that I aspired; and I recoil at the first hard lessons. What if it had been some really poor and ill-paid girl, whose great want had weakened her spirit against the temptation of bartering body and soul for ease and the semblance of love? I ought to be thankful for my sex that it was I who suffered the indignity."

And, as Lillian walked rapidly along, in a sort of feverish excitement, she began to be conscious of a great void made in her heart. Some hope had died out of it. She was abashed, and crimson blushes dyed her face and burned upon her forehead, to remember that what was but corruption looked, until now, pleasant and fair in her inexperienced eyes. She never knew, until she had reason to despise him, that she had thought so well of Arthur Knowe; but she set herself resolutely not to feel grieved at her disappointment, and only acknowledged to herself that she was sorry it had happened, on account of Eunice Harvey and King Granville. It had interrupted her pleasant little plan of bringing them together, at least until something else could be thought of than the plan already formed.

That evening, however, as she sat solitary in her cozy library, the look of care and vexation fled away on the radiance of a dawning smile; and, promising herself to see another phase of worldliness, in a more agreeable manner, Lillian immediately commenced preparations by writing a pretty little note, and addressing it to "King Granville, Esq."

CHAPTER III.

"As letters some hand has invisibly traced,
When held to the flame, will steal out to the sight,
So many a feeling that long seemed effaced
The warmth of a meeting like this brings to light."

BUT Lillian had not calculated on the detective abilities of Miss Angela Knowe, in the

bottom of whose pocket the pretty little note reposed in darkness, doomed never to meet the eyes of him for whom it was intended. It was fortunate, considering this circumstance, that the billet contained only these few words, unintelligible to Angela: "I will undertake to find your friend for you in a few days, if you will endeavor to be patient," and signed "Lillian White." Angela had often puzzled her brain over those few words, and was compelled to acknowledge that there was no great appearance of danger decipherable in them, except the objectionable name at the bottom.

In the mean time, Lillian had gone twice to the house on — Avenue, at such hours of the day as Arthur was likely to be absent, with the intention of asking to speak with Granville. In the first instance, she was refused an interview by the attendant, the family being out; and in the second had had her money thrust in her face, and been denied admission altogether. Flushed with indignation, she was turning to descend the steps, and threw the silver pieces to a beggar, when Arthur Knowe confronted her, looking so startled and so joyous at the meeting, that, in spite of her determination to the contrary, she could not forbear a slight glance of recognition, which, however, she speedily concealed under her veil, with a feeling of shame.

"Miss White," said Arthur, walking by her side, "do you throw away money which you need because you will not take it from the hands of this hated family? Have I been so unfortunate as to stand in your way pecuniarily? If you would allow me to make some restitution—"

"No restitution is needed, sir."

"Then we will not talk of that. I rejoice that I have met you to-day, for more reasons than because I am glad to see you again—which is better fortune than I deserve—but on account of Granville, whose recovery is really retarded by his anxiety about you, which is not of the nature I once foolishly feared it was, but, apparently, because you could tell him something which he very much wishes to know. I am aware that, after what I just witnessed at my mother's door, you might say—were you not dear Lillian White—I had no right to expect you would do anything to oblige one of our family; but this matter takes on a serious face when we see that Granville is a sufferer by the disagreeable position of affairs, more than any one else. Angela, too, who has set her heart on Granville, is very anxious for his recovery, though by her foolish jealousy she de-

feats herself. Now, Miss White, what I ask of you is that you will intrust me with this business, whatever it may be, and empower me to set my cousin's heart at rest."

"Even if it be the destruction of Angela's hopes?"

"What! You cannot mean that it is true, what Angela suspects of the state of Granville's heart?"

"No," answered Lillian, coldly, "it is not true that Mr. Granville is the least interested in me personally; nevertheless, what I had to tell him would put an end to any hopes your sister may entertain with regard to him. Being fully assured of this, would you become the bearer of my message?"

"That is a trying question, Miss White. If I was sure it was interest in King, and not in his fortune, that Angela feels, the test would be severe to decide in this case. I should like to know that I did not injure Angela's prospects of happiness by interfering in this matter."

"That is something I have not taken into consideration, nor shall I, in the communication I have to make to Mr. Granville. You have solicited this office of kindness; if now you shrink from undertaking it, there are other means, I trust, that will not fail."

"You are resolved, then, to thwart Angela's expectations, if you can? Are you kind, Miss White?"

"Will your sister marry Mr. Granville, whether he will or no?"

"I see you think she is capable of it. Perhaps she is. Give me this message, and I promise to deliver it, trusting to your evident conviction of the final result that I am doing right."

Again was Lillian betrayed into a half smile, as she thanked him for the promise, which again she immediately regretted, as, answering it with one far brighter, he said:—

"I have won one smile from the eyes dearest in the world, though ever so faint and lukewarm. Could I do something to deserve another more cordial and inspiring, I should be happy, indeed."

"Nay, if you regard this service as done to me, I recall my commission. There can be no exchange of obligation or reward between us, even the reward of an involuntary smile. Please to understand me, Arthur Knowe. I do not consider all means of communication between Mr. Granville and myself cut off, because your family refuse to admit me. You asked for the commission, and I did not refuse it."

"I see! I see! I am to do this little service

for my cousin, and not for you. Well, be it so. I am sworn, Lillian White, that one day you shall respect me, with or against your will."

"You forget that we are not likely to meet again; and here we are at the corner where I must take the omnibus."

"Do not ride; let me walk home with you. You have not given me the message yet."

"By no means; I prefer going home in an omnibus. Yet stay a moment. Were you to know that the person in whom your cousin is interested is only a sewing-girl, like myself, would you still deliver the message?"

"Were she like yourself, and not yourself, I should feel that I was conferring an infinite favor upon him by taking him any message from her not unkind."

For the third time Lillian smiled against her will, and saw the light reflected an hundredfold more brightly from the eyes that watched her constantly. "It is enough," she said, quickly; "tell Granville that, when he has been two weeks at any place on the seashore, for the benefit of his health, the person in whom he is interested will find means to meet him there. The place of his destination and the time of his departure can be inclosed in a note addressed to me through the post-office."

At this instant an omnibus drew up, and, stepping in, with only a slight bow to Arthur, Lillian was carried a square or two farther down town before she commenced retracing her steps towards home, so careful had she been to leave no trace of her real course to Arthur's knowledge.

And thus it happened that the detective was eluded; and Lillian was in possession of a letter stating that, on the last of May, King Granville would leave New York for Newport. And it also happened, in pursuance of her design, that the name of Mrs. Whyte, followed by "and servant," and under it the name of Miss Harvey, appeared on the hotel register, about the middle of June. There was some speculation, as there always is, concerning the new arrival, and the gentlemen, after they had each and singly looked at the names on the register, prepared themselves to be on the lookout for the new "Miss." As for King Granville, he glanced at the names and turned away disappointed, though it was true he had started at seeing "Miss Harvey." But who could this Mrs. Whyte be? Eunice had no relatives of that name. Yet might it not be possible that she had been compelled to become humble companion to some woman of fashion? But

he did not think this Miss Harvey was Eunice. So strong had been his hope of meeting her that, with an instinctive feeling of inability to bear a disappointment, he would not let himself believe she was near him until he saw her, and, in a fever between doubt and belief, retired to his room to await dinner. When that meal was announced, he found himself unable to go down stairs, so great was the excitement of his nerves, and in immediate danger of another attack upon his lungs.

But there was one other who had also consulted the register, and only to be puzzled. Arthur Knowe had accompanied his cousin to Newport, ostensibly out of concern for his welfare. Nor would we be so unfair as to doubt his professions; at the same time, we would take the liberty of suggesting that a sort of instinct, or presentiment, or second sight had imparted to him the conviction that at Newport he should learn something further of Lillian White. Of the name of the person his cousin expected to meet he knew nothing; therefore he had no reason to suppose that the expected arrival had yet taken place, and when he seated himself at table was so absorbed with thinking of Granville's disappointment—to say nothing of his own—that he neglected to look for the strangers.

"Have you seen her, Knowe?" asked a young man at his elbow.

"Seen whom, Thorne?" responded Arthur, starting as if he thought his secret had been read.

"Mrs. Whyte. She is splendid! by Jove, the handsomest woman that's been here this five years. It's no use trying to see her from here; but just keep on the lookout when she rises from table. Venus rising from the sea will be nothing to it, I'll warrant you. And there's a very pretty girl with her, dressed in black, a young, shy thing; but she isn't a taper to this new star. I believe she, that is the star, is a widow. At any rate, nobody can find out who her husband is, if she has got one, and there is no doubt she's rich."

"You've been industrious, Fred, to pick up all this intelligence in so short a time. Whom will you get to introduce you?"

"Oh, I shall circulate around amongst the ladies, and find somebody that knows something about them, and get acquainted before to-morrow night. I'll introduce you then, if you would like, though remember the widow is my game."

"I shall recollect nothing of the kind, unless I take a fancy to the 'young, shy thing' you

say can't 'hold a candle to her,' which I do not promise to do."

The guests commenced leaving the table. The young men sat still on purpose to watch the ladies go by, and Thorne, fixing his eyes on the supposed widow, whispered: "There she is, Knowe; do you see her?"

Yes, Arthur saw her, and magnificent did Eunice Harvey look, as, dressed in the height of fashion and good taste, she glided through the throng. But it was not on her his gaze was riveted; there was the youthful and graceful figure of Lillian White, dressed as he had never before seen her, her exquisitely fair and rounded arm and lovely neck set off so well by her dress of black silk tissue and her luxuriant brown hair, half in braids and half in curls, adorning her head more than diamonds, close beside the "star." And she had caught his glance and blushed. Up he sprang, and was at the door before them.

"Miss White," he said, bowing to her companion, "permit me to speak to you of my cousin." Ah, that cousin! Was not he glad he had a sick cousin? "Granville, my dear Miss White, is quite ill again to-day, and I hardly know whether it is from hope deferred or joy anticipated. Is his friend here?" he whispered, bending so her ear alone should catch the question.

"Hush!" said Lillian. "*This is his friend; she does not know about it yet.*"

"You will have to introduce me," he said, in the same tone.

"I acknowledge the necessity—Mr. Arthur Knowe, Miss Harvey." And while the usual exchange of compliments was taking place, Lillian was trying to see her way clear in this unexpected dilemma. Here was something she had not counted upon, the meeting of Arthur Knowe here, and the necessity of making him of use. However, she must put the best face upon her difficulties, and, whispering him to prepare his cousin, promised him aloud to meet him again in half an hour on the piazza.

That half hour was one of intense feeling to the two persons most interested, and Lillian regretted that she had so long put off the "pleasant surprise" she intended to give her friend, since now it was more likely to be painful than pleasant.

Reclining in a fauteuil, in the most shaded corner of the piazza, was the invalid at the time appointed, and Arthur Knowe keeping watch over him, laughing, and jesting, and quoting rhymes, and doing whatever he could to keep off the symptoms of a nervous attack, which

he constantly dreaded. Not that his own mind was so much at ease; indeed, it was not altogether untroubled by stormy winds of doubt, arising not only out of the position he was in with Lillian, but from a strange confusion in his head about names, and not knowing who Mrs. Whyte was, and several other crude ideas, in no wise so easily digested as his dinner. Nevertheless, he kept up a great appearance of good spirits until a "silken murmur" gave warning of some one approaching, and then, ejaculating "King, be a man!" advanced to meet Lillian and Miss Harvey. Both were pale, the one with emotion and the other with sympathy; and it was with an effort he could command himself to present them to his cousin, who, seeing their approach, had risen to his feet and stood with pale lips and glittering eyes, waiting to clasp the hand of her who had been so loved and so lamented.

"My Eunice!"

"My King!"

The spoken words were hoarse and indistinct, but there was no misunderstanding the language of eyes, and every feature breathing love, pain, gladness, and regret. Lillian turned her face away to hide its tremulousness and tears; but, turn whichever way she would, the eyes of Arthur found her out and studied her intently.

Seeing that his cousin was too much agitated to talk, Arthur at length suggested to Lillian that they should walk away for a few minutes, and leave the lovers to themselves, the propriety of which suggestion Lillian acknowledged by taking his proffered arm.

"You have pity for others' miseries, but none for mine, Miss White," he said, after a moment's silence. "Have you no fear that I shall become like my cousin there? It runs in our family to die of love."

Lillian gave him a look full of mirth, for the idea of his dying of love amused her exceedingly, but, meeting his magnetic look, was compelled to observe him seriously, and could not help perceiving that he had really grown much thinner and paler since their last meeting. A strange embarrassment fell upon her, and the fact that he still addressed her as "Miss White" occurred to her unpleasantly. She signified her desire to return to their friends, wishing to avoid further conversation.

"You will not have pity, then?" he said, sadly, holding her back as much as he could by a slow movement.

Still Lillian did not answer or look at him

again; and, in a moment more, they were beside Granville's chair.

"Eunice has told me," said he, "and no words can convey an expression of my gratitude, Mrs. Whyte, for your double kindness."

"Mrs. Whyte!" interrupted Arthur. "Will you tell me, Miss Harvey, whether this lady is Miss White or Mrs. W-h-y-t-e?"

"Certainly, sir. She is Mrs. Whyte, relict of the late Manly Whyte, Esq., resident at No. — Avenue —, a lady of a large fortune, but immensely larger heart and more costly virtues."

The silence that fell after this explanation was broken, at last, by Arthur, over whose face a rapid flush had passed, and left it strikingly pale and composed. "She has every virtue but one—that of forgiveness," said he, in a voice of deep regret. "I loved her, and I offended her. She forgets the love; she does not forget the offence. The sight of Granville's happiness and the constant sense of my misfortune are too much for me, and I leave my cousin henceforth to you, Miss Harvey, knowing his recovery will be rapid and sure, and that he can henceforth dispense with me."

"Do not let him go," whispered Eunice to Lillian, whose face grew red and then white, and red and white again, every instant.

"No, do not let him go," pleaded Granville. "Arthur has told me all, and there were extenuating circumstances. Moreover, he declares himself heartily tired of the idleness and folly of fashionable life, which is at the bottom of its vices. He is about to commence the study of a profession and turn worker in the world. Do not let him go, for we cannot spare him yet."

"No, do not let me go, dearest Lillian, but hold me fast forever!" entreated Arthur, extending his hand doubtfully.

Miss Harvey, who was holding one of Lillian's hands, placed it in Arthur's open palm, which speedily closed over it with a loving pressure.

That evening, when the promenaders filled the piazza, a young man kept much in the vicinity of our friends, and cast some envious glances at Knowe and Granville.

"Poor Thorne!" laughed Arthur, "he thinks I am a lucky dog, and is mentally consigning me to the bottom of the Red Sea for not introducing him."

Angela was in great consternation, on her arrival next day, at the position of affairs, but finally concluded to overlook her own loss on account of her brother's gain. She declared she had always thought Lillian was a lady,

and loved her like a sister, and had been inconsolable at her unaccountable absence. As for Mrs. Knowe, she grew more unbending than ever after her son's engagement ; and poor Mr. Knowe, Senior, said—what he always did about family affairs—nothing.

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